

# On the nature of differential object marking: Insights from Palauan

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## 1 Introduction

Differential Object Marking (DOM) is a phenomenon in which only a subset of objects are overtly marked. Overt marking can be realized as case morphology,  $\phi$ -agreement, clitic doubling, or adposition. Cross-linguistically, DOM is sensitive to (at least) two nominal qualities – definiteness (1) and/or animacy (2) (e.g. Silverstein 1976, Moravcsik 1978, Comrie 1979, Croft 1988, Bossong 1991, Enç 1991, de Hoop 1996, Torrego 1998, Aissen 2003, Kalin 2014):

- (1) *Definiteness scale*  
Pronoun > Name > Definite > Specific Indefinite > Nonspecific
- (2) *Animacy scale*  
First/Second > Third Pronoun > Name > Human > Animate > Inanimate

Descriptively, the scales above form cross-linguistically constant implicational hierarchies; if a nominal lower on the scale, i.e. to the right, is overtly marked, all nominals higher on the scale, i.e. to the left, will also be overtly marked. However, DOM languages differ as to which scale(s) are relevant to object marking, as well as to where along the scale(s) the distinction is made between marked and unmarked objects.

The majority of accounts of DOM appeal to the core proposal that there is some effect that arises when, during the normal course of a well-formed syntactic derivation, two nominals – the subject and the object – occupy the same local domain (e.g. Aissen 2003, Lidz 2006, Merchant 2006, de Hoop & Malchukov 2008, Baker & Vinokurova 2010, Richards 2010, López 2012, Ormazabal & Romero 2013, Coon & Preminger 2017). Accounts of this nature vary as to what local domains are (and how they are defined) as well as to why the effect emerges. Regardless of the details, when the subject and the object occupy the same local domain, the object is overtly marked. However, an alternative has recently been proposed. DOM (at least in some cases) is best modeled as an *exceptional licensing* phenomenon (Kalin 2014, 2016; see also Rezac 2011, Lochbihler 2012). Marked objects in DOM systems *must* establish a syntactic dependency within the clause, via AGREE. However, this requirement cannot be satisfied during the normal course of the syntactic derivation. Instead, it forces the addition of licensers not otherwise present in the derivation. Unmarked objects in DOM systems do not require licensing. They need not, and moreover do not, establish the same exceptional licensing dependencies.

In this paper, I employ data from Palauan (Austronesian) in support of the licensing approach to DOM. Palauan shows a pattern of DOM, sensitive to both definiteness (1) and animacy (2), that is *limited to the imperfective (viewpoint) aspect* (Josephs 1975; Georgopoulos 1991, 1992; Woolford 2000, 2013; Nuger 2007 *et seq.*). Depending on certain factors, including animacy, number, and specificity, direct objects – as well as indirect objects and some thematic subjects – are marked with *er* in the imperfective (3).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Glossing of Palauan data varies widely from source to source. In an effort to maintain uniform glossing throughout this paper, despite reliance on many sources, I employ the Leipzig Glossing Rules. Supplementing the Leipzig Glossing Rules, the following abbreviations are utilized: = - (realis) subject clitic;  $\pm$ H - human/non-human; L - linker; O - (perfective) object agreement; P - possessor agreement; P - preposition; S - (irrealis) subject agreement. Also, I have regularized the representation of the glottal stop [ʔ] as *ch*, despite variation in the source material. This is the orthographic standard (Nuger 2016; pp. 307-8).

- (3) a. A Sally a menguiu **\*(er)** se el hong.  
 DET S. TOP read.IPFV **\*(ER)** that L book  
 ‘Sally is reading that book.’  
 b. A Sally a menguiu **(\*er)** aike el hong.  
 DET S. TOP read.IPFV **(\*ER)** those L book  
 ‘Sally is reading those books.’

[Nuger 2016: 110]

In (3), if the direct object is singular (3a), *er*-marking is required. If the direct object is plural (3b), *er*-marking is impossible. For the moment, I remain agnostic as to what exactly the element *er* is in cases of DOM like the one above, returning to a more complete discussion in §4.2. For now, it is crucial to note that its presence in (3a), and absence (3b), is conditioned by the number of the direct object. Outside of the context of DOM, *er* appears as a general oblique marker, as will become apparent in numerous examples below.

Arguments that trigger *er*-marking in the imperfective do not do so in the perfective. Compare the (a) and (b) examples below:

- (4) a. Ng *menga* **er** a meradel a sechelik.  
 3SG= eat.IPFV **ER** DET orange DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is eating an orange / the orange.’  
 b. Ng *mo kol-ii* a meradel a sechelik.  
 3SG= AUX.FUT eat.PFV-**3SGO** DET orange DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is going to eat an orange / the orange.’

[Nuger 2009: 139]

- (5) a. Ng *omeka* **er** a rengalek a sechelik.  
 3SG= feed.IPFV **ER** DET children DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is feeding children / some children / the children.’  
 b. Ng *mo mekel-terir* a rengalek a sechelik.  
 3SG= AUX.FUT feed.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET children DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend will feed children / some children / the children.’

[Nuger 2009: 139]

The singular specific non-human direct object *a meradel* ‘orange’ and the plural human direct object *a rengalek* ‘children’ both trigger *er*-marking in the imperfective, (4a) and (5a) respectively. In the perfective aspect, (4b) and (5b), neither triggers *er*-marking. Instead, object agreement is realized on the verb (Wilson 1972; Josephs 1975; Georgopoulos 1991, 1992; Woolford 2000, 2013; Nuger 2007 *et seq.*).

Below, I will argue that such aspect-conditioned DOM is best modeled as a licensing phenomenon. In brief, I propose to account for aspect-conditioned DOM in Palauan as follows: the syntax of non-perfective aspect is more structurally complex than that of perfective aspect, in a way to be made clear in §3 (Laka 2006; Coon 2010, 2013; Coon & Preminger 2011, 2017; Kalin & Van Urk 2014; see also Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, 2007). This additional complexity blocks AGREE into the VP, yielding the complete absence of object  $\phi$ -agreement in the imperfective, as in (3), (4a), and (5a). With the imperfective VP opaque to  $\phi$ -probing, canonical nominal-licensing cannot occur, for the same reason that  $\phi$ -agreement cannot occur. In such an environment, *er* is inserted to exceptionally license only those nominals that would induce ungrammaticality if left unlicensed. (See, e.g., Chomsky 1981, Stowell 1981, Bobaljik 1993, Rezac 2011 for accounts of various phenomena that employ similar strategies). This strategy yields the attested pattern of DOM and immediately limits its realization to imperfective constructions. The complexity of imperfective aspect is independent of any ‘ergativity’ in the language, providing more support to the position that aspect splits have nothing to do with syntactic or morphological ergativity (e.g. Coon 2013, Kalin & Van Urk 2014, Coon & Preminger 2017).

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: In §2, I discuss the details of *er*-marking and object agreement more fully. In §3, I analyze the aspect split, suggesting that the cross-linguistic generalization

that imperfective aspects are more complex manifests itself in Palauan. In §4, I turn to *er*-marking. I show that adopting the present account of the aspect split allows us to straightforwardly explain why DOM is limited to the imperfective. Moreover, in §5, I argue that the facts disambiguate various theories of DOM. They can only be captured on an exceptional licensing account. §6 concludes.

## 2 Patterns of object marking in Palauan

In this section, I detail the phenomena of *er*-marking and object agreement more completely. In particular, I illustrate, following Nuger (2009), that the class of objects that triggers object agreement is *not* identical to the class of objects that triggers *er*-marking. For the moment, I take it for granted that what I refer to as viewpoint aspect is precisely that and not some other verbal alternation. In §3.3.1, I provide evidence for this position.

It should be noted at the outset that Palauan verbal morphophonology is extremely complex (see Wilson 1972, Flora 1974, Nuger 2016 for discussion). The surface forms of verbs can vary widely based on aspectual and tense specifications, among other factors, and morphological decomposition is often difficult. Below, I do not provide morpheme-by-morpheme glosses of Palauan verbs. Rather, I highlight only those portions of the morphology that are relevant to the purposes of this paper.

### 2.1 Differential object marking

When a transitive verb appears in the imperfective aspect, indicated by the prefixes *meN-* or *oN-*, its direct object is not cross-referenced on the verb, regardless of  $\phi$ -featural specification.<sup>2</sup> Instead, a DOM effect arises, signaled by *er*-marking and conditioned by animacy, number, and specificity.

All human objects are marked with *er*, regardless of number/specificity (6).

- (6) a. A Steven a olengeseu \*(**er**) ngke el chad.  
 DET S. TOP help.IPFV \*(**ER**) that L person  
 ‘Steven is helping that person.’
- b. A Steven a olengeseu \*(**er**) tirke el chad.  
 DET S. TOP help.IPFV \*(**ER**) those L person  
 ‘Steven is helping those people.’
- c. Ke ullengeseu \*(**er**) a ngii di el chad er a elecha el sils?  
 2SG= help.PST.IPFV \*(**ER**) DET any L person P DET now L day  
 ‘Did you help anybody today?’ [Nuger 2016: 109-10]

*Er*-marking arises on specific human objects regardless of number, as seen in (6a) and (6b). We can be sure the nominals are specific, because they include the distal demonstratives *ngke* ‘that’ and *tirke* ‘those’. Furthermore, we can be sure they vary in number, because they utilize distinct demonstratives inflected for number. Similarly, human objects trigger *er*-marking regardless of specificity, as in (6a) and (6c). The object *a ngii de el chad* ‘anybody’ in (6c) is non-specific, because the NPI *ngii di* ‘any’ appears within the scope of a non-veridical operator – specifically a polar question (e.g. Nuger 2010, 2016; see also Giannakidou 2011 and sources cited therein). Use of the demonstrative in (6a) ensures specificity.

Similarly, as 1st and 2nd person pronouns are uniformly human, they are *er*-marked. *Er*-marking on 1st and 2nd person pronouns is shown in (7).

<sup>2</sup>In this paper, I do not decompose the imperfective marker into imperfective morpheme and verb marker (Nuger 2016; cf. Wilson 1972, Josephs 1975). As far as I can tell, nothing critical hinges on this decision. See Nuger (2016: pp. 146-7) for a critique of such a decomposition.

- (7) a. Te ullengeseu **\*(er)** ngak / kid / kemam.  
 3PL.+H= help.PST.IPFV **\*(ER)** me / us.INCL / us.EXCL  
 ‘They were helping me / us.’  
 b. Te ullengeseu **\*(er)** kau / kemia?  
 3PL.+H= help.PST.IPFV **\*(ER)** you.SG / you.PL  
 ‘Were they helping you / you guys?’ [adapted from Nuger 2007: 15]

Non-human objects are marked with *er* only when they are singular *and* specific (8).

- (8) a. A Sally a menguiu **\*(er)** se el hong.  
 DET S. TOP read.IPFV **\*(ER)** that L book  
 ‘Sally is reading that book.’  
 b. A Sally a menguiu **\*(er)** aike el hong.  
 DET S. TOP read.IPFV **\*(ER)** those L book  
 ‘Sally is reading those books.’  
 c. Ke milenguiu **\*(er)** a ngii di el hong er a elecha el sils?  
 2SG= read.PST.IPFV **\*(ER)** DET any L book P DET now L day  
 ‘Did you read any (a single) book today?’ [Nuger 2016: 110]

The singular specific object bearing the distal demonstrative *se* ‘that’ in (8a) *must* be *er*-marked. However, the plural specific object bearing the distal demonstrative *aike* ‘those’ in (8b) and the non-specific object bearing the NPI *ngii di* ‘any’ in a non-veridical environment in (8c) *cannot* be *er*-marked.<sup>3</sup>

Palauan displays additional, typologically rare instances of DOM. Looking at more complex constructions like ditransitives and clauses embedded under exceptional case marking / subject-to-object raising (ECM/SOR) predicates, we see that (certain) indirect objects and embedded subjects are marked with *er*, so long as the Fmatrix predicate is in the imperfective aspect.

- (9) A Romana a omeka **er** a rengalek er a kukau.  
 DET R. TOP feed.IPFV **ER** DET children ER DET taro  
 ‘Romana is feeding the children the taro.’ [Josephs 1975: 347]  
 (10) Kom mengiil **er** a re-chad er a Ekipten el mo oltobed a kuruma me  
 2PL= expect.IPFV **ER** DET PL-person P DET Egypt L AUX.FUT take.out.IPFV DET chariots and  
 a re-chad er a uos el mei!  
 DET PL-person P DET horse L come  
 ‘You expect the Egyptians to send you chariots and cavalry!’ [Nuger 2016: 121]

<sup>3</sup>Nuger (2007) observes that speakers’ judgments vary regarding *er*-marking on direct objects that refer to common household animals, e.g. dogs and pigs, (i) (see also Josephs 1997).

- (i) Ak ullemes **(er)** a teblo el bilis el ngar er a bita er a kerrekar.  
 1SG= see.PST.IPFV **(ER)** DET two.-H L dog COMP be.located P DET space.beside P DET tree  
 ‘I watched the two dogs near the tree.’ [Nuger 2007: 28]

If common household animals are treated like human objects with respect to *er*-marking, the direct object in (i) bears *er*, because all human objects are *er*-marked. If common household animals are treated like non-human objects with respect to *er*-marking, the direct object in (i) will not bear *er*, because plural non-human objects are not *er*-marked.

Nuger does not discuss how these speakers treat common household animal direct objects with respect to object agreement. If speakers treat such objects as human-like for the purposes of *er*-marking, we expect them to treat the same objects as human-like for the purposes of object agreement, utilizing the 3rd person plural human object morpheme *-(e)terir*. If speakers treat such objects as non-human for the purposes of *er*-marking, we expect them to treat the same objects as non-human for the purposes of object agreement, realizing no (overt) agreement morphology.

Josephs (1997: p. 69) does observe that speakers’ judgments vary as to whether or not common household animals can control subject agreement. This variation may suggest that object agreement should behave similarly, as predicted.

In (9), object agreement (with either internal argument) is unavailable, and the indirect object, like transitive direct objects, is marked with *er*. In fact in (9), *both* internal arguments are *er*-marked. I return to this point in §4.3. Similarly, the embedded subject *a re-chad er a Ekipten* ‘Egyptians’ in (10) is 3rd person, plural, and human. When the matrix predicate is imperfective, it too triggers *er*-marking. See fn. 18 for arguments in favor of the ECM/SOR analysis of constructions like (10).

The patterns of *er*-marking are summarized in the table in (11).

- (11) *Distribution of ‘er’-marking* (adapted from Nuger 2016: 109)

	HUMAN		NON-HUMAN	
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL
SPECIFIC	<i>er</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>er</i>	∅
NON-SPECIFIC	<i>er</i>	<i>er</i>	∅	∅

Note that number is an otherwise unattested factor in DOM (e.g. Aissen 2003). I return to this in §4.4.

## 2.2 Object agreement

When a transitive verb appears in the perfective aspect, indicated by the infixes <(e)m>, <u>, or <o>, its direct object is cross-referenced on the verb by means of  $\phi$ -agreement. The table in (12) summarizes the forms of object  $\phi$ -agreement.

- (12) *Object agreement morphemes* (adapted from Nuger 2016: 107)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL	
		INCLUSIVE	EXCLUSIVE
1ST PERSON	<i>-ak</i>	<i>-id</i>	<i>-emam</i>
2ND PERSON	<i>-au</i>		<i>-emiu</i>
3RD PERSON [+H]	<i>-ii</i>		<i>-(e)terir</i>
3RD PERSON [-H]	<i>-ii</i>		∅

Data exemplifying the 3rd person object agreement paradigm are given in (13). Note that some verb roots, like ‘see’ below, condition irregular object agreement morphemes. These irregularities are commonly found in 3rd person forms (see Georgopoulos 1991; Nuger 2010, 2016 for further details). One such irregular form is the 3rd person singular object agreement marker *-ang* in (13c).

- (13) a. Ng mo kol-**ii** a bobai.  
3SG= AUX.FUT eat.PFV-**3SGO** DET papaya  
‘He is going to eat papaya / a (particular) papaya / the papaya up.’
- b. Ng mo kmang a bobai.  
3SG= AUX.FUT eat.PFV DET papaya  
‘He is going to eat papayas / some (particular) papayas / the papayas up.’
- c. Ng mo mes-**ang** a tolechoi.  
3SG= AUX.FUT see.PFV-**3SGO** DET baby  
‘He will see some baby / a (particular) baby / the baby.’
- d. Ng mo mes-**terir** a re-tolechoi.  
3SG= AUX.FUT see.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET PL-baby  
‘He will see babies / some (particular) babies / the babies.’ [Nuger 2016: 106]

Unlike object pronouns in the imperfective (7), object pronouns in the perfective are cross-referenced by  $\phi$ -agreement, and must be null (14) (e.g. Josephs 1975, Georgopoulos 1991).

- (14) a. Ng chillebed-**ak** (\*ngak)  
 3SG= hit-**1SGO** (\*me)  
 ‘S/he hit me.’ [Georgopoulos 1992: 167]
- b. Ak ultir-**au** (\*kau).  
 1SG= love-**2SGO** (\*you)  
 ‘I love you.’
- c. Te chillebed-**ii** (\*ngii).  
 3PL.+H= hit-**3SGO** (\*s/he)  
 ‘They hit him / her / it.’ [Georgopoulos 1991: 43]

In fact, this pattern arises whenever  $\phi$ -agreement cross-references a pronoun, i.e. whenever a pronoun serves as subject, agreeing possessor (see fn. 14), or internal argument in the perfective aspect. (But see fn. 16 for discussion of a potential counter-example.)

Turning to more complex constructions, we see that indirect objects (15) and subjects embedded under ECM/SOR predicates (16) trigger object  $\phi$ -agreement on the matrix verb if that verb is in the perfective aspect (Josephs 1975; Georgopoulos 1991, 1992; Woolford 2000; Nuger 2010, 2016):

- (15) Ak mils-**terir** a reschelik a hong.  
 1SG= give.PST.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET friends DET book  
 ‘I gave my friends a book / the book.’ [Josephs 1975: 207]
- (16) Ak mo rul-**leterir** a re-chad er a Ekipten el mo mengull er  
 1SG= AUX.FUT make.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET PL-person P DET Egypt L AUX.FUT respect.IPFV ER  
 a re-ched-ak.  
 DET PL-person-1SGP  
 ‘I will make the Egyptians respect my people.’ [Nuger 2016: 120]

In (15), both the indirect object and the direct object bear the requisite  $\phi$ -features to trigger overt object agreement, i.e. neither is plural non-human. However, it is the indirect object that, in fact, controls object agreement. In (16), the embedded subject *a re-chad er a Ekipten* ‘Egyptians’ is 3rd person, plural, and human. Unlike the state of affairs in the imperfective, in the perfective this embedded subject triggers the requisite agreement morphology, taken from the object agreement paradigm.<sup>4</sup>

It must be noted here that the object agreement morphemes show a striking resemblance to independent pronouns. Compare (12) to (17):

- (17) *Independent pronouns* (adapted from Nuger 2016: 27)

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
			INCLUSIVE	EXCLUSIVE
1ST PERSON	<i>ngak</i>	<i>kid</i>	<i>kid</i>	<i>kemam</i>
2ND PERSON	<i>kau</i>		<i>kemiu</i>	
3RD PERSON[+H]	<i>ngii</i>		<i>tir</i>	
3RD PERSON[-H]	<i>ngii</i>		$\emptyset$	

With the exception of the 3rd person plural human marker, object agreement markers are identical to independent pronouns, save the (absence of the) initial velar consonant.

<sup>4</sup>The absence of *er*-marking on embedded subjects in (16) is one factor that distinguishes Palauan DOM from Spanish DOM. Spanish DOM marks human specific direct objects with *a*. Furthermore, *all subjects* embedded under ECM/SOR predicates are also marked with *a* (e.g. Ormazabal & Romero 2013). Palauan, however, retains featural sensitivity in *er*-marking on embedded subjects. This fact will become important for disambiguating competing models of DOM in §4-5.

This kind of formal similarity between object cross-referencing morphology and pronouns or other D<sup>0</sup>-elements has been taken to be a diagnostic that the element in question is a clitic (e.g. Uriagereka 1995, Bleam 1999, Anagnostopoulou 2003, Kramer 2014, Preminger 2014), and there has been some debate in the Palauan literature regarding the status of the object agreement markers. Some have claimed they are true agreement morphemes (e.g. Georgopoulos 1991, 1992; Nuger 2007 *et seq.*), while others have claimed they are clitics (e.g. Capell 1949, Woolford 2013). Georgopoulos (1991; pp. 51-9) provides a number of arguments that the markers that cross-reference objects (and subjects) are indeed inflectional morphemes. For example, following Zwicky & Pullum (1983), she notes that the morphological idiosyncrasy of object agreement, as in (13c), is not expected if the elements in question are clitics. Such irregularities are expected from inflectional morphology (but see, e.g., Nevins 2011, Arregi & Nevins 2012 for objections to this line of reasoning). I tentatively adopt her position in this paper, though I believe the claims made below stand regardless of whether object cross-referencing morphology is true  $\phi$ -agreement or clitic doubling. This is particularly true if  $\phi$ -agreement is a prerequisite for clitic doubling (e.g. Béjar & Rezac 2003; Roberts 2010; Preminger 2011, 2014; Harizanov 2014; Kramer 2014).<sup>5</sup>

### 2.3 Mismatches between $\phi$ -agreement and *er*-marking

It is often reported that all and only those nominals that trigger object agreement in the perfective aspect trigger *er*-marking in the imperfective (e.g. Josephs 1975; Georgopoulos 1991; Woolford 2000, 2013). However, this is not exactly the case.

To be sure, there are a number of instances in which object agreement and *er*-marking do apply to the same arguments, including in ditransitive and ECM/SOR constructions. As shown in §1, the singular specific non-human direct object *a meradel* ‘orange’ and the plural animate direct object *a rengalek* ‘children’ both trigger *er*-marking in the imperfective and object agreement in the perfective, (18) and (19) respectively.

- (18) a. Ng *menga* **er** a meradel a sechelik.  
 3SG= *eat*.IPFV ER DET orange DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is eating an orange / the orange.’
- b. Ng mo *kol-ii* a meradel a sechelik.  
 3SG= AUX.FUT *eat*.PFV-**3SGO** DET orange DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is going to eat an orange / the orange.’ [= (4)]
- (19) a. Ng *omeka* **er** a rengalek a sechelik.  
 3SG= *feed*.IPFV **ER** DET children DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is feeding children / some children / the children.’
- b. Ng mo *mekel-terir* a rengalek a sechelik.  
 3SG= AUX.FUT *feed*.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET children DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend will feed children / some children / the children.’ [= (5)]

Furthermore, plural non-human direct objects do not trigger *er*-marking or (overt)  $\phi$ -agreement (20).

- (20) a. Ng *menga* a meradel a sechelik.  
 3SG= *eat*.IPFV DET orange DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is eating oranges / some oranges / the oranges.’
- b. Ng mo *kma* a meradel a sechelik.  
 3SG= AUX.FUT *eat*.PFV DET orange DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is going to eat oranges / some oranges / the oranges.’ [Nuger 2009: 139]

<sup>5</sup>Nuger (2016) agrees with Georgopoulos’s treatment of object agreement morphology, but claims that the status of subject cross-referencing morphology is less clear. He argues that such morphology can surface either as a clitic *or* as  $\phi$ -agreement based on mood. Clitics are employed in the realis mood;  $\phi$ -agreement in the irrealis mood.

Note that, in the absence of a demonstrative, bare non-human nouns do not display number specification. Human nouns can bear the plural prefix *re-*, as in (19), but this is not necessary to achieve a plural interpretation, so long as another number-denoting element is present (e.g. demonstratives or numerals). Despite the identity of forms in (18) and (20), the direct object *a meradel* ‘orange’ differs in number. As indicated by the translations, the object is singular in (18) and plural in (20). This change in number triggers the attested differences in object agreement and *er*-marking.

Nevertheless, there are feature combinations for which *er*-marking and object agreement diverge (as a careful examination of the tables in (11) and (12) would have already revealed). Singular non-human non-specific DPs trigger object agreement but no *er*-marking.

Nuger (2009 *et seq.*) provides two examples that highlight this mismatch. First, he observes that mass nouns like *a ralm* ‘water’ can be optionally *er*-marked in the imperfective. The presence/absence of *er* has ramifications for the interpretation of the object. When *er* is present, the direct object receives a specific interpretation (21a). When *er* is absent, the direct object receives a non-specific interpretation (21b).

- (21) a. Ke millim **er** a ralm er a blil a delak el mechas?  
 2SG= drank.IPFV **ER** DET water P DET house DET my.mother L old.woman  
 ‘Were you drinking *the water* at my grandmother’s house?’  
 b. Ke millim a ralm er a blil a delak el mechas?  
 2SG= drank.IPFV DET water P DET house DET my.mother L old.woman  
 ‘Were you drinking *water* at my grandmother’s house?’ [Nuger 2009: 140]

Unlike count nouns, mass nouns are unambiguous with respect to number interpretation. Therefore, specificity can be pinpointed as the difference between (21a) and (21b). Crucially, in the perfective, the same direct object triggers object agreement regardless of its specificity (22).

- (22) Ke ngilelm-\*(**ii**) a ralm er se er a do-muchel el merael?  
 2SG= drank.PFV-\*(**3SGO**) DET water P that.time P DET 1PL.INCL-start L walk  
 ‘Did you drink (*the*) water when we started walking?’ [Nuger 2009: 140]

3rd person singular object agreement *-ii* surfaces in (22) whether the direct object is specific or non-specific.

The same sensitivity to specificity is found in the behavior of count nouns. As mentioned in §2.1, the element *ngii di* ‘any’ can function as an NPI. (It can also function as a free choice item.) It is licensed in the scope of non-veridical operators, like polar questions (6c) and (8c), and downward-entailing operators, like negation (23) (Ladusaw 1979, Nuger 2009).

- (23) Ng dimlak k-chuieu-**ii** a ngii di el hong. (#Ng chedekekek.)  
 3SG= false.PST 1SGS-read.PFV-**3SGO** DET any L book (#3SG= black)  
 ‘I didn’t read any book. (#It’s black.)’ [Nuger 2009: 145]

Following Karttunen (1969), Nuger takes the inability of *ngii di el hong* ‘any book’ to serve as a discourse antecedent, evidenced by the infelicity of the continuation in (23), to indicate that it must be non-specific. As the presence of the suffix *-ii* on the verb indicates, the object is also singular. Therefore, we expect that the singular non-specific object *should not* trigger *er*-marking. This expectation is confirmed:

- (24) Ng dimlak ku-nguiu a ngii di el hong. (#Ng chedekekek.)  
 3SG= false.PST 1SGS-read.IPFV DET any L book (#3SG= black)  
 ‘I wasn’t reading any book. (#It’s black.)’ [Nuger 2009: 145-6]

By comparing (23) and (24), specificity can again be pinpointed as the relevant factor in determining when a singular non-human object does or does not trigger *er*-marking. However, specificity has nothing to do with determining when arguments trigger object agreement.

Given this mismatch, we can be sure that *er*-marking is sensitive to specificity while object agreement is not (but see e.g. Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007 for qualifications of the notion of specificity in Spanish DOM). I follow Josephs (1975) and Nuger (2007 *et seq.*) in maintaining that only *er*-marking should be viewed as a DOM phenomenon. *Er*-marking only applies to a subset of direct objects in the imperfective aspect. On the other hand, object agreement targets all nominals in the perfective aspect. It is simply an accident of the language that plural non-human  $\phi$ -agreement is spelled out as  $-\emptyset$ . (See §3.2, especially fn. 10, and §4.3 for more details on this point.)

Previous research into these two patterns of object marking – object agreement and *er*-marking – has, for the most part, maintained that they arise from morphophonological idiosyncrasies of a single, underlying syntactic phenomenon (e.g. Josephs 1975, Georgopoulos 1991, Woolford 2000). In the abstract, these analyses maintain that such a phenomenon always takes place in the narrow syntax, but its overt realization is affected by conditions on morphological exponence. For instance, Woolford (2000) claims that objects which trigger  $\phi$ -agreement and *er*-marking uniformly undergo object shift in the narrow syntax. Object shift has, as a morphophonological consequence, the effect of forcing  $\phi$ -agreement and *er*-marking in the perfective and imperfective aspects, respectively. Before proceeding, it should be noted that, as Nuger (2009) stresses, the mismatches between *er*-marking and object  $\phi$ -agreement presented in (21-24) argue strongly against this family of analyses. Once a more complete range of data is considered, it can be shown that the two types of object marking do not mirror each other perfectly. There exist nominals that trigger object agreement and no *er*-marking. Previous accounts which maintain that all and only those nominals that trigger  $\phi$ -agreement trigger *er*-marking and *vice versa* cannot capture such variability.<sup>6</sup> As I demonstrate below, the present analysis does not face this difficulty. (Nuger 2007 *et seq.* also provides analyses to capture this difference. I discuss his approach in §5.1.)

### 3 The interaction of agreement and aspect

Before exploring what aspect-conditioned DOM in Palauan reveals about the nature of DOM more generally, we must understand why aspect conditions the presence/absence of object agreement. In §4, I will build on the conclusions reached here to probe the nature of DOM.

I account for the aspect-conditioned object agreement split in Palauan by appealing to the cross-linguistic generalization that non-perfective aspects are more (syntactically) complex than perfective aspects (see, e.g., Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, 2007; Laka 2006; Coon 2010, 2013; Coon & Preminger 2011, 2017; Kalin & Van Urk 2014). Specifically, I will suggest that the Palauan perfective  $\nu$ P constitutes a single phase, while the imperfective  $\nu$ P is made up of two phases (Laka 2006; Coon 2010, 2013; Coon

<sup>6</sup> Another mismatch between *er*-marking and  $\phi$ -agreement is illustrated in (ii) and (iii), repeating data from (9) and (15).

- (ii) Ak mils-**terir** a reschelik a hong.  
 1SG= givePST.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET friends DET book  
 'I gave my friends a book / the book. [= (15)]
- (iii) A Romana a omeka **er** a rengalek **er** a kukau.  
 DET R. TOP feed.IPFV **ER** DET children **ER** DET taro  
 'Romana is feeding the children the taro.' [= (9)]

In (ii), only agreement with the indirect object is registered on the verb. However in (iii), *both* internal arguments are *er*-marked. In this instance, a nominal whose featural specification is not overtly reflected by object agreement morphology in the perfective does trigger *er*-marking in the imperfective. This mismatch does not necessarily motivate a split in the source of the two phenomena, *both* arguments of the double object construction might be targeted by  $\phi$ -agreement in (ii) via MULTIPLE AGREE. Conditions on the exponence of the result of multiple  $\phi$ -agreement relations could then limit overt relation to only one of the two relations (e.g. Anagnostopoulou 2005, Nevins 2011; see also Hiraiwa 2001, 2005). Unlike, object agreement, *er*-marking faces no similar problem of exponence, resulting in multiple *er*-marked objects in (iii). I return to the issue of MULTIPLE AGREE in §4.3

& Preminger 2011, 2017). This extra phase boundary, introduced only in the imperfective, renders  $\phi$ -agreement from  $v^0$  incapable of targeting the direct object. Failure to find an appropriate goal does not yield a crash at the interfaces, i.e. unvalued  $\phi$ -features on  $v^0$  can survive in a well-formed derivation (e.g. Preminger 2011, 2014). However, failure to find an appropriate goal does result in the complete absence of object agreement morphology. Adopting this position, the presence/absence of Palauan object agreement morphology receives an explanation rooted in independently motivated, cross-linguistic differences between the syntax of perfective and non-perfective aspects.

### 3.1 Background: Non-perfective aspects disrupt object agreement (and case)

Non-perfective aspects disrupt canonical syntactic processes – most notably agreement and case (see, e.g., Dixon 1979, 1994; Coon 2013 for overviews). For example, consider the perfective/non-perfective alternations in Basque (25), Gujarati (Indo-Aryan) (26), and Archi (Nakh-Dagestanian) (27), below. In each instance, the case (indicated by underlining) and  $\phi$ -agreement (indicated by bold face) patterns of the perfective clause (a) are altered in the non-perfective clause (b).

- (25) a. Emakume-ak ogi-ak jan **d-it-u- $\emptyset$** .  
 woman-ARTsg.ERG bread-ARTpl(ABS) eaten **3.ABS-pl.ABS- $\sqrt{\text{AUX-3sg.ERG}}$**   
 ‘The woman has eaten the breads.’
- b. Emakume-a ogi-ak ja-te-n ari **d-a**.  
 woman-ARTsg(ABS) bread-ARTpl(ABS) eat-NMLZ-LOC PROG **3.ABS- $\sqrt{\text{AUX(3sg.ABS)}}$**   
 ‘The woman is eating the breads.’ [Laka 2006: 177]
- (26) a. Ramesh-e pen khərid-y-i.  
 R.M-ERG pen.F(ABS) buy-PFV-F  
 ‘Ramesh bought the pen.’
- b. Ramesh pen khərid-t-o hə-t-o.  
 R.M(ABS) pen.F(ABS) buy-IPFV-M AUX-IPFV-M  
 ‘Ramesh was buying the pen.’ [Coon 2012: 7]
- (27) a. Buwa-mu xx<sup>w</sup>alli **b-ar-ši** **b-i**.  
 mother-ERG bread(III).ABS (III)-make-PTCP (III)-be  
 ‘Mother is baking the bread.’
- b. Buwa xx<sup>w</sup>alli **b-ar-ši** **d-i**.  
 mother(II).ABS bread(III).ABS (III)-make-PTCP (II)-be  
 ‘Mother is baking the bread.’ [Coon 2013: 196]

Despite vast genetic and geographical distance between the languages above, they display common properties triggered by aspectual alternation. In perfective clauses, an ergative-absolutive case pattern is realized, and the verb either agrees with both the subject and object, as in Basque (25a), or with the object alone, as in Gujarati (26a) and Archi (27a). In non-perfective clauses, both arguments surface in the absolutive case, and object agreement patterns are altered. In Basque (25b) and Gujarati (26b), the verb no longer cross-references the direct object. In Archi (27b), the lexical verb still agrees in noun class with the object, but the auxiliary does not (see Coon 2013 and sources cited therein for a number of other examples).

For our current purposes, the alternations in object agreement patterns in (25-27) are of particular interest. A pattern identical to Palauan is attested in unrelated languages; *object agreement is realized in the perfective aspect and absent in non-perfective aspects*.

Coon (2010, 2013) suggests that the aspect splits found in (25-27) all arise due to the introduction of complex syntactic structure associated with non-perfective aspects. Note, for instance, that both the Basque progressive (25b) and Gujarati imperfective (26b) involve a more complex *verb+auxiliary* construction that

is not employed in the perfective forms, (25a) and (26a). In fact, she suggests that such complex structure is *always* found in non-perfective aspects, because the perfective aspect is the default aspect and non-perfective aspectual interpretation can only be achieved through the use of additional, frequently spatial/locative, elements (see also Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994; Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, 2007).<sup>7</sup> The presence of additional spatial/locative structure can be seen transparently in the progressive constructions of languages like French (28a) and Dutch (28b) (e.g. Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994, Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, Coon 2013):

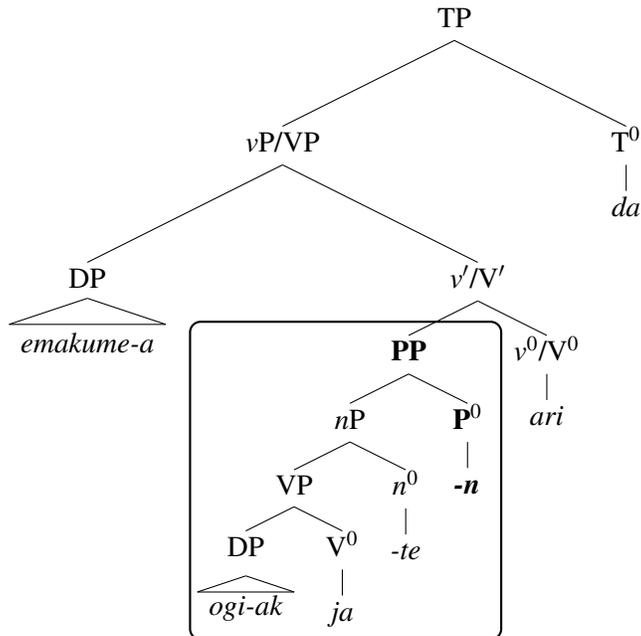
- (28) a. Zazie est **en train de** jouer.  
 Z. is **in along of** play  
 'Zazie is playing.'  
 b. Ik ben het huis **aan** het bouwen.  
 I am the house **at** the build  
 'I am building the house.'

[Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000: 178]

Similar patterns are attested in Welsh, Middle English, and non-standard German (Laka 2006, Coon 2013).

Languages that demonstrate case and agreement alternations due to the presence of additional structure needed to achieve non-perfective interpretations do so because the additional structure is syntactically opaque, i.e. a phase (Coon 2010, 2013). Laka (2006) provides a phasal account of the Basque progressive split in (25). The proposed structure for (25b) is provided in (29). She argues that the progressive auxiliary *ari* embeds a PP, indicated by the locative suffix *-n*, which contains the lexical verb and its object (within a nominalization signaled by *-te*). This proposal ensures the attested case and agreement alternations. The subject cannot bear ergative case because it is not a transitive subject; the auxiliary *ari* only takes one nominal argument and is, therefore, intransitive. Furthermore, the object is not expected to register agreement on the matrix auxiliary because it is contained within a subordinate phrase.

- (29) *Structure of the Basque 'ari' progressive* (Laka 2006)



<sup>7</sup>This is not to say that additional structure cannot be added to derive perfective interpretations (see Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, 2007). A more accurate characterization might be that the 'simplest' perfective construction will be simpler than the 'simplest' non-perfective construction, but more research is needed to determine if this is *always* the case cross-linguistically.

Coon & Preminger (2017) note that similar analyses have been provided for Nakh-Dagestanian languages, like Archi (27) (e.g. Forker 2010, Gagliardi et al. 2012). Note that as the main verb and object are contained within the same phrase in a derivation like (29), we expect agreement/concord phenomena that hold between the two to persist, regardless of aspect. This is true for noun class agreement in Archi (27) (see Polinsky 2016 for additional details). The main verb (but not the auxiliary) is inflected for object noun class in both perfective and imperfective aspects.

In the next section, I provide an analysis for Palauan split-aspect that also makes use of the presence of additional, opaque structure.

### 3.2 Explaining split aspect in Palauan

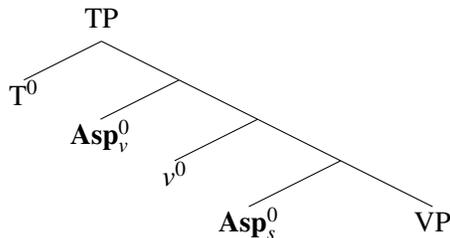
Now, recall the Palauan aspect split. Some examples are provided below:

- (30) a. Ng mo *kol-ii* a meradel a sechelik.  
 3SG= AUX.FUT *eat*.PFV-**3SGO** DET orange DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is going to eat an orange / the orange.’  
 b. Ng *menga* er a meradel a sechelik.  
 3SG= *eat*.IPFV ER DET orange DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is eating an orange / the orange.’ [Nuger 2009: 139]
- (31) a. Ng mo *mekel-terir* a rengalek a sechelik.  
 3SG= AUX.FUT *feed*.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET children DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend will feed children / some children / the children.’  
 b. Ng *omeka* er a rengalek a sechelik.  
 3SG= *feed*.IPFV ER DET children DET my.friend  
 ‘My friend is feeding children / some children / the children.’ [Nuger 2009: 139]

Unlike Basque, French, or Dutch, there is no transparent evidence of extra, prepositional (i.e. spatial/locative) structure in the imperfective that is absent from the perfective, nor is there independent evidence that the lexical verb and its direct object are otherwise separated from the subject and higher clausal structure. However, I believe that this lack of transparent structure should not be of great concern. As Coon (2013) notes, it is reasonable to expect these alternations to be null in some languages (see, e.g., Kalin & Van Urk 2014) and to even be expressed via functional (rather than lexical) heads. I adopt this position here.

I adapt Travis’s (2010) articulated clausal spine for the syntactic realization of aspect, presented below:

- (32) *Loci of aspect along the clausal spine* (Travis 2010)

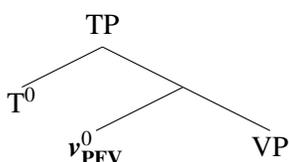


Aspectual information is contributed by two functional heads. The structurally higher  $Asp_v^0$ , often called viewpoint, functional, or outer aspect, is responsible for relating the event time to the assertion time (e.g. Reichenbach 1947, Smith 1991, Klein 1995; see Coon 2013 for an overview). Here event time refers to the time at which the event/state provided by the interpretation of the  $vP$  occurs/holds, and assertion time refers to the time about which the speaker is making a statement. In the perfective aspect, the assertion time

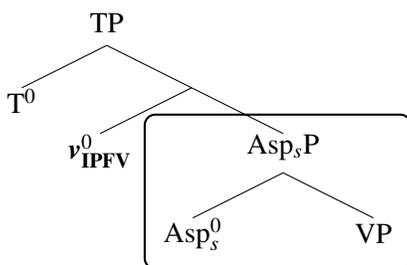
contains the entire event time making reference to the event’s beginning and end. In non-perfective aspects, the assertion time does not contain the entire event time. The structurally lower  $\text{Asp}_s^0$ , often called situation, lexical, or inner aspect, serves to manipulate a particular verb’s Aktionsart – accomplishment, achievement, state, etc. (e.g. Vendler 1967).

I propose to amend the structure in (32) in three ways to account for the Palauan data presented above: (i) I collapse  $\text{Asp}_v^0$  and  $v^0$  into a single head which I refer to as  $v^0$ . For the sake of presentational clarity, I will refer to the  $v^0$  that encodes perfective viewpoint aspect as  $v_{[\text{PFV}]}^0$  and to the  $v^0$  that encodes imperfective viewpoint aspect as  $v_{[\text{IPFV}]}^0$ . (ii) I posit that the situational aspect projection,  $\text{Asp}_s^0$ , is only present in imperfective constructions. That is to say,  $v_{[\text{PFV}]}^0$  immediately selects for a VP, while  $v_{[\text{IPFV}]}^0$  selects an  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  which itself takes a VP-complement. (iii)  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  is a phase. The proposed clausal spines of Palauan perfective and imperfective clauses are given in (33) and (34), respectively.

(33) *Palauan perfective clause*



(34) *Palauan imperfective clause*



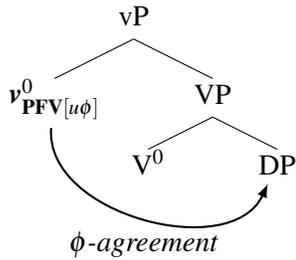
I will motivate these amendments to Travis’s clausal architecture in §3.3. For now, note that the structures presented above encode the generalization discussed in §3.1, the syntactic structure of imperfective clauses is more complex than those of perfective clauses, and, at least in languages where this additional complexity results in changes to case and agreement patterns, this structure is syntactically opaque.

For concreteness, I hold that, in addition to  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$ , CP and (active, transitive)  $v\text{P}$  are phases, and that spell-out of a phase occurs as soon as the next phase head enters the derivation (e.g. Chomsky 2000). When the next phase head is merged, the complement of the lower phase head is spelled-out. In the present case, the VP-complement to  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  will spell out as soon as (active/transitive)  $v^0$  is merged.

If the proposed structures in (33) and (34) are on the right track, we can account for the co-variation of the presence/absence of object agreement with perfective/imperfective viewpoint aspect as follows: In the perfective aspect,  $v_{[\text{PFV}]}^0$  directly selects a VP. Therefore, the contents of the VP, including the direct object, are visible to  $\phi$ -probing from  $v^0$  and object agreement occurs.<sup>8</sup> This is diagrammed in (35):

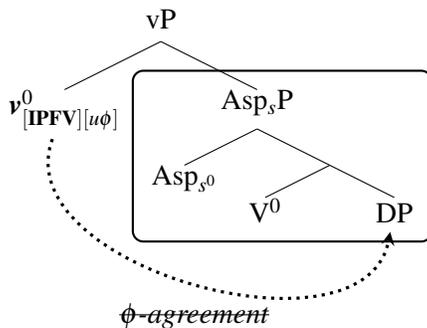
<sup>8</sup>A closely related alternative would be to posit that perfective  $v^0$ , like imperfective  $v^0$ , *does* select for an  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$ . Crucially, unlike the  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  of imperfective clauses, this  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  would need to be non-phasal to allow for probing from  $v^0$  to target the DP-complement to  $V^0$ . This analysis is problematic in that it would posit the phasal status of a given head/projection comes and goes depending on the featural/semantic specification of another head, namely  $v^0$ . Moreover, §3.3.2 demonstrates that the proposed selectional variability is independently motivated. I thank two anonymous reviews for valuable discussion concerning this point.

(35) *Successful object agreement*



In the imperfective aspect,  $v^0_{[IPFV]}$  selects a phasal  $Asp_s^0$ . Therefore, the VP sister to  $Asp_s^0$ , and its contents including the direct object, are not visible to  $\phi$ -probing from  $v^0$  and object agreement is blocked. This is diagrammed in (36):

(36) *Failed object agreement*



Adopting the position that imperfective aspect selects a phasal situation aspect, whereas perfective aspect directly selects a VP, straightforwardly captures the pattern of object  $\phi$ -agreement attested in Palauan. Furthermore, this proposal is consistent with proposals that have attributed aspect-based case/agreement splits to similar alternations in clausal structure. In §4 and §5, I employ the present account of aspect-conditioned object agreement to explore the nature of DOM.

The present analysis also explains why A-movement is insensitive to aspectual specification. Passive constructions show subject  $\phi$ -agreement with the logical object, regardless of the aspectual specification of the clause. The data is complicated somewhat by the fact that passives show no morphological specification for aspect (a point I return to below in §3.3.1), but independent diagnostics confirm that passives can be formed from both perfective and imperfective clauses.

Nuger (2010, 2016) reports that certain predicates have distinct interpretations based on aspect. The verb *omes* means ‘watch’/‘babysit’ in the imperfective, but ‘see’ in the perfective. The change in interpretation can be detected by observing the (in)felicity of certain reason clauses that force either the ‘watch’/‘babysit’ or ‘see’ interpretation. Consider the dichotomy below:

- (37) a. Ng sebechek el **omes** er a ngalek e le ...  
 3SG= ability-1SGP L **see.IPFV** ER DET child because  
 ‘I can watch/babysit the child, because ...’
- b. ... Ng mle ungil a blekerdel-el er tia el mlo merek el taem.  
 3SG= AUX.PST good DET behavior-3SGP P this L PST.become finished L time  
 ‘... he behaved well last time.’

- c. #... Ng oubail er a bibrurek el cheleched-al a bail.  
 3SG= wear.IPFV ER DET yellow L torso-3SGP DET clothing  
 ‘... he’s wearing a yellow shirt.’ [Nuger 2016: 131]
- (38) a. Ng sebechek el **mes-ang** a ngalek e le ...  
 3SG= ability-1SGP L **see.PFV-3SGO** DET child because  
 ‘I can see the child, because ...’
- b. #... Ng mle ungil a blekerdel-el er tia el mlo merek el taem.  
 3SG= AUX.PST good DET behavior-3SGP P this L PST.become finished L time  
 ‘... he behaved well last time.’
- c. ... Ng oubail er a bibrurek el cheleched-al a bail.  
 3SG= wear.IPFV ER DET yellow L torso-3SGP DET clothing  
 ‘... he’s wearing a yellow shirt.’ [Nuger 2016: 131]

The (in)felicity of the continuations in (37b,c) and (38b,c) can be attributed to the aspect-specific meaning of the predicate in (37a) and (38a). It would be odd that a child’s wearing a yellow shirt is necessary for someone to be able to babysit him. Similarly, it would be odd that a child’s good behavior is necessary for someone to be able to see him.

In the passive, overt aspectual morphology is not realized on the verb; passive morphology is. Moreover, there are no constraints placed on the content of the reason clause.

- (39) a. Ng sebechek el a ngalek el **o-bes** e le ...  
 3SG= ability-3SGP DET child L **PASS-see** because  
 ‘The child may be watched/babysat/seen, because ...’
- b. ... Ng mle ungil a blekerdel-el er tia el mlo merek el taem.  
 3SG= AUX.PST good DET behavior-3SGP P this L PST.become finished L time  
 ‘... he behaved well last time.’
- c. ... Ng oubail er a bibrurek el cheleched-al a bail.  
 3SG= wear.IPFV ER DET yellow L torso-3SGP DET clothing  
 ‘... he’s wearing a yellow shirt.’ [Nuger 2016: 132]

Given that both continuations are licit, we can conclude that passives can be formed from either perfective or imperfective clauses. The question then is given the present proposal, why is object agreement into the imperfective VP blocked, but subject agreement into the same domain available.

Crucially, I maintain that the complements of phase heads only spell-out when the next phase head is merged. In the case of imperfective transitive clauses, spell-out of the VP-complement to  $Asp_s^0$  happens immediately, because the next head – active, transitive  $v_{[IPFV]}^0$  – is itself a phase head. No projections intervene to trigger syntactic operations before spell-out. However, if passive  $v^0$  is not a phase (Chomsky 2000, but see e.g. Legate 2003, Deal 2009 for counter-arguments), then VP will not spell-out immediately in passives like (39). In fact, under the present analysis, VP will not spell-out until the merger of  $C^0$  – the next phase head. This allows for subject agreement between  $T^0$  and the direct object and A-movement to occur. If subject-to-subject raising and unaccusative constructions are also formed by merger of a non-phasal  $v^0$ , we expect these constructions to be insensitive to aspectual specification, as well. Investigation of these facts must, however, be left for future work. Investigating the role of phasal  $Asp_sP$  in  $\bar{A}$ -movement construction is not possible, as the language lacks  $\bar{A}$ -movement entirely (Georgopoulos 1991).

Before motivating the selectional relationship between  $v_{[IPFV]}^0$  and  $Asp_s^0$  invoked in this section to capture the complete absence of object  $\phi$ -agreement in the imperfective aspect, it is worth repeating a crucial assumption regarding derivations like (36), in which object agreement fails. I maintain, following Preminger (2011, 2014), that failure to value  $[u\phi]$  on  $v^0$  is tolerated by the derivation so long as valuation is attempted. In (36), as no  $\phi$ -bearer is accessible in the c-command domain of  $v^0$  the derivation does not crash. Rather,

[ $u\phi$ ] is sent to the interfaces in its unvalued state. At PF (and LF), unvalued features can be interpreted just like their valued counterparts. Failure to realize object agreement in the perfective (35) is ruled out as an instance of ‘gratuitous non-agreement’; whenever object agreement *can* occur, it *must* occur. Preminger (2009 *et seq.*; see also Kramer 2014) suggests, that [ $u\phi$ ] that survives to PF is realized as 3rd person singular, i.e. default morphology. This is because 3rd person and singular number represent the *absence* of marked  $\phi$ -features (e.g. Harley & Ritter 2002, McGinnis 2005). Crucially, in Palauan 3rd person singular morphology does not surface when object agreement fails. 3rd person singular morphology is the suffix *-ii* (12). We might therefore expect verbs in the imperfective aspect to uniformly bear the suffix *-ii*, realizing default object agreement, contrary to fact. There are at least two viable explanations for the complete absence of object agreement that are consistent with the present proposal. First, we might imagine that some languages do have a dedicated default that is non-identical to 3rd person, singular morphology, i.e. 3rd person is a ‘real’ person (e.g. Nevins 2007, Baker 2012) or singular number is a ‘real’ number.<sup>9</sup> In Palauan, this default would be  $-\emptyset$ . Alternatively, we might conclude that object agreement in Palauan is, in fact, clitic doubling. This option was entertained in §2.2. As Preminger (2009) argues, a hallmark distinction between clitic doubling and  $\phi$ -agreement is that failure of the former, but not the latter, has *no* overt realization, i.e. there is no “default” clitic doubling. (Recall that while Georgopoulos argues against analyses of object cross-referencing morphology as *phonological* clitics, she does not provide evidence against treating object cross-referencing morphology as *syntactic* clitics, in the sense of Nevins 2011 and subsequent work.) I remain agnostic as to which of these is correct.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.3 The locus and selection of aspect

In the previous section, I suggested that the syntactic structure of the Palauan imperfective aspect is more complex than that of the perfective aspect. This position places Palauan in line with other languages which show similar variation, cf. §3.1. In particular, imperfective clauses contain a phasal  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$ , selected by  $v^0_{[\text{IPFV}]}$ , that is absent from perfective clauses in which  $v^0_{[\text{PFV}]}$  directly selects VP. The presence/absence of phasal  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  dictates the availability of object agreement. When  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  is present, object agreement fails. When  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  is absent, object agreement succeeds. In this section, I offer further support for two of the assumptions made above. First, I provide arguments that viewpoint aspect,  $\text{Asp}_v^0$  and  $v^0$  should be collapsed in Palauan. Second, I demonstrate that  $v^0_{[\text{PFV}]}$  directly selects VP while  $v^0_{[\text{IPFV}]}$  selects situation aspect.

#### 3.3.1 Collapsing viewpoint aspect and $v^0$

Identifying the locus of viewpoint aspect in Palauan is complicated by some contradictory facts. On the one hand, both the semantics and morphology of Palauan aspect conform to common assumptions about the meaning and syntactic placement of viewpoint aspect, not situation aspect. This suggests that such morphology is the realization of  $\text{Asp}_v^0$ . Simultaneously, it is clear that aspectual morphology is tightly

<sup>9</sup>Of these two possibilities, it is more likely that 3rd person is a ‘real’ person. This is because mass nouns, which by hypothesis have no number, nevertheless trigger canonical 3rd person singular agreement, as seen in example (22).

<sup>10</sup>The clitic doubling account forces the position that non-human plural arguments are doubled by a null clitic. Recall that the only arguments not cross-referenced by overt morphology in perfective clauses are non-human plurals (12). I know of no language that has been proposed to employ null clitics, but they could in principle exist. The position is especially plausible in Palauan where non-human plural free pronouns are also obligatorily null (17). This is illustrated below:

- (iv) Ke mes aike el hong? Ak milenguui  $\emptyset$  / \*er ngii / \*er tir.  
 2SG= see.PFV those L book 1SG= read.PST.IPFV **them.-H** / \*ER it / \*ER them.+H  
 ‘Do you see those books? I was reading them.’

[Nuger 2007: 14]

If the is clitic taken to be a pronominal copy of the nominal it doubles (e.g. Anagnostopoulou 2003), it, in fact, follows that the non-human plural clitics would be null.

intertwined with elements of the voice system. This suggests that such morphology is the realization of  $v^0$ . I posit that this dual character can be straightforwardly captured if the two heads in question are collapsed into one. Aspect morphology interacts with both the aspectual and voice systems because it is the realization of a single head that encodes both systems.

Consider first the evidence that Palauan aspectual morphology reflects viewpoint, and not situational, aspect. Perfective viewpoint aspect describes an event in its entirety, without reference to the internal temporal structure of the event. Imperfective viewpoint aspect describes an event in progress, regardless of when the event actually occurs with respect to the utterance time. If Palauan aspect specification encodes viewpoint aspect, we expect to find evidence of the (in)completeness of the events described by these predicates. To this end, it is possible to construct environments in which one of the two aspects is strange or contradictory, because the complete/incomplete meaning of the perfective/imperfective form is at odds with the context (Josephs 1975).

With this in mind, consider the alternation in (40). In (40a), the verb appears in the imperfective aspect. In (40b), it appears in the perfective.

- (40) a. Ak mla **mengu**iu er a hong (e ng di dirkak k-bo k-merek).  
 1SG= AUX **read**.IPFV ER DET book (but 3SG= but not.yet 1SGS-AUX.FUT 1SGS-finished)  
 ‘I have been reading the book (, but I haven’t finished it yet).’
- b. Ak mla **chui**eu-ii a hong (<sup>#</sup>e ng di dirkak k-bo k-merek).  
 1SG= AUX **read**.PFV-3SGO DET book (<sup>#</sup>but 3SG= but not.yet 1SGS-AUX.FUT 1SGS-finished)  
 ‘I have read the book (<sup>#</sup>, but I haven’t finished it yet).’ [Josephs 1975: 261]

Imperfective morphology in (40a) contributes the meaning that the event of reading the book was incomplete. Perfective morphology in (40b) contributes the meaning that the event of reading the book was complete. It then follows that the continuation ‘but I haven’t finished it yet’, in parentheses, is felicitous in the imperfective, but not the perfective. The continuation is compatible with a scenario in which the event of reading the book was incomplete, but it is incompatible with a scenario in which the event of reading the book is complete.

A similar effect arises when a time-interval is made explicit. In (41a), the verb appears in the imperfective aspect. In (41b), it appears in the perfective.

- (41) a. A Droteo a **milengi**is er a kliokl (er a euid el klok el mo eai el klok er a  
 DET D. TOP **dig**.IPFV ER DET hole (P DET seven L clock L go eight L clock P DET  
 tutau).  
 morning)  
 ‘Droteo was digging the hole (from 7 o’clock to 8 o’clock this morning).’
- b. A Droteo a **kilis**-ii a kliokl (<sup>#</sup>er a euid el klok el mo eai el klok er  
 DET D. TOP **dig**.PFV-3SGO DET hole (<sup>#</sup>P DET seven L clock L go eight L clock P  
 a tutau).  
 DET morning)  
 ‘Droteo dug the hole (<sup>#</sup>from 7 o’clock to 8 o’clock this morning).’ [Josephs 1975: 262]

The presence of the time span ‘from 7 o’clock to 8 o’clock this morning’ is felicitous with the imperfective aspect (41a), because imperfective aspect *implicates* that the described event has internal temporal structure. Perfective aspect does not implicate internal temporal structure to the event described. Therefore, it is strange, but not ungrammatical, to employ the time span expression in (41b). Given the attested sensitivity to the (in)completeness of the event described, it appears that Palauan aspect specification does encode

viewpoint aspect.

Additional support for this conclusion comes from the observation that aspectual alternations do not (directly) affect aspectual class, i.e. Aktionsart (Nuger 2016). If Palauan aspectual specification encoded situational aspect, we would expect certain aspectual classes to only be associated with one aspect or another. This expectation is not borne out. Perfective/imperfective alternations are well-formed with predicates of various aspectual classes, including accomplishment (42) and stative (43) predicates.

- (42) a. Ak **omek-dakt** er a uel.  
 1SG= **IPFV.CAUS-fear** ER DET turtle  
 ‘I’m scaring the turtle.’  
 b. Ak **mek-dekt-ii** a uel.  
 1SG= **PFV.CAUS-fear-3SGO** DET turtle  
 ‘I’m scaring the turtle.’ [Nuger 2016: 128-9]
- (43) a. Ke dirk **melatk** er ngak?  
 2SG= still **remember.IPFV** ER me  
 ‘Do you remember me?’  
 b. Ak mo **lotk-ii** a telbil-ek er kemiu.  
 1SG= AUX.FUT **remember.PFV-3SGO** DET plan-1SGP P you.PL  
 ‘I will remember my promise to you.’ [Nuger 2016: 129-30]

Nuger (2016: pp. 129-30) shows that other stative predicates behave in the same manner shown in (43).

The morphology of Palauan aspect also suggests that it encodes viewpoint aspect. Aspectual morphology appears outside of, i.e. to the left of, morphology thought to be hosted in the *vP/VoiceP* domain (Nuger 2016; see Travis 2010 for a similar argument for Tagalog). Consider the data in (42) repeated below:

- (44) a. Ak **om-ek-dakt** er a uel.  
 1SG= **IPFV-CAUS-fear** ER DET turtle  
 ‘I’m scaring the turtle.’  
 b. Ak **m-ek-dekt-ii** a uel.  
 1SG= **PFV-CAUS-fear-3SGO** DET turtle  
 ‘I’m scaring the turtle.’ [= (42)]

In both the imperfective (44a) and the perfective (44b), aspectual morphology – *oN-* (imperfective) and *<m>* (perfective) – is realized to the left of the causative prefix *uek-*. Assuming that the Mirror Principle (Baker 1985) holds, the ordering of aspectual morphology to the left of causative morphology, commonly held to be introduced in the *vP/VoiceP* domain (e.g. Miyagawa 1998; Travis 2000; Harley 2008, 2013), suggests that Palauan aspectual morphology is hosted higher in the clause. This is consistent with it realizing viewpoint aspect (and not situation aspect).

The evidence presented above provides strong motivation for modeling Palauan aspectual morphology as viewpoint aspect, i.e. the spell-out of  $Asp_v^0$ . However, additional data suggests that the spell-out of aspectual morphology is affected by voice-specification.

Recall from §3.2 that certain predicates have distinct interpretations based on aspect. The verb *omes* means ‘watch’/‘babysit’ in the imperfective, but ‘see’ in the perfective. The change in interpretation can be detected by observing the (in)felicity of certain reason clauses that force either the ‘watch’/‘babysit’ or ‘see’ interpretation. However, in the passive, overt aspectual morphology is not realized on the verb; passive morphology is.

- (45) a. Ng sebec-el a ngalek el **o-bes** e le ...  
 3SG= ability-3SGP DET child L PASS-see because  
 ‘The child may be watched/babysat/seen, because ...’
- b. ... Ng mle ungil a blekerdel-el er tia el mlo merek el taem.  
 3SG= AUX.PST good DET behavior-3SGP P this L PST.become finished L time  
 ‘... he behaved well last time.’
- c. ... Ng oubail er a bibrurek el cheleched-al a bail.  
 3SG= wear.IPFV ER DET yellow L torso-3SGP DET clothing  
 ‘... he’s wearing a yellow shirt.’ [=(39)]

The data in (45) reveal two insights: (i) The *overt* realization of aspectual morphology is not necessary to achieve the ‘watch’/‘babysit’ or ‘see’ interpretations of *omes*. The former is a process/activity predicate; the latter an achievement (in the sense of Vendler 1967). This reinforces the position that aspect morphology in Palauan is *not* directly responsible for manipulating inner-aspectual class, i.e. Palauan aspect morphology does not encode situation aspect. (ii) Aspectual morphology competes for exponence with passive morphology, suggesting that both classes of morpheme occupy the same syntactic location. This second position is further supported by the observation that intransitive predicates, whether unergative or unaccusative, *never* display aspectual specification (Josephs 1975, Georgopoulos 1991, Nuger 2016).

If active-passive (as well as transitivity) alternations are triggered by the specific ‘flavor’ of  $v^0$  that enters the derivation (e.g. Kratzer 1996), the inability to realize aspectual morphology in passives (and intransitives) can be captured if aspectual morphology is itself a ‘flavor’ of  $v^0$ . If this approach is correct, there are two flavors of transitive  $v^0$  in Palauan, whose realizations are constrained by aspect – perfective little  $v$ ,  $v_{\text{PFV}}^0$ , and imperfective little  $v$ ,  $v_{\text{IPFV}}^0$ , as proposed above. These heads simultaneously carry the syntactic (and semantic) specification of viewpoint aspect and voice.<sup>11</sup> On this view, the co-occurrence of aspect morphology and causative morphology itself held to be a realization of  $v^0$ , in (44), may appear surprising. Nevertheless, this co-occurrence can be modeled either as an instance of recursive  $v^0$ s or by decomposing the VoiceP/ $v$ P; aspect morphology would then be the realization of Voice<sup>0</sup> and causative morphology the realization of  $v^0$  (see, e.g., Legate 2012, 2014; Harley 2013 and sources therein).

### 3.3.2 $v_{\text{IPFV}}^0$ selects situation aspect

Situation aspect,  $\text{Asp}_s^0$ , manipulates a particular verb’s Aktionsart. If, as the present analysis proposes,  $\text{Asp}_s^0$  is limited to imperfective clauses (selected only by  $v_{\text{IPFV}}^0$ ), we expect to find evidence that verbs in the imperfective have a *wider range* of interpretations than those in the perfective. These additional interpretations would be contributed by the specific  $\text{Asp}_s^0$  head that is merged. Although additional work is needed to confirm these findings in a broader context, some initial support for this expectation is available.

Nuger (2016) observes that manipulations in viewpoint aspect affect the interpretation of a verb’s telicity. Consider again the data in (42), repeated below:

- (46) a. Ak **om-ek-dakt** er a uel.  
 1SG= IPFV-CAUS-fear ER DET turtle  
 ‘I’m scaring the turtle.’  
 (IMPLIED: I am doing an action to scare the turtle.)
- b. Ak **m-ek-dekt-ii** a uel.  
 1SG= PFV-CAUS-fear-3SGO DET turtle  
 ‘I’m scaring the turtle.’  
 (IMPLIED: I am doing an action that is scaring the turtle.) [=(42)]

<sup>11</sup>A plausible alternative would be to model  $\text{Asp}_v^0$  as an independent head, separate from  $v^0$ . On this view,  $\text{Asp}_v^0$  heads in Palauan are always null, but they select morphologically overt forms of  $v^0$  (Nuger 2016).

The verb *omekdakt* ‘frighten/scare’ is an accomplishment predicate; it has a natural endpoint. Importantly, however, the imperfective sentence in (47a) does not *entail* that whatever was being done to try to scare the turtle actually worked. In contrast, the perfective sentence in (47b) *entails* that the turtle was scared. Nuger is quick to note that the difference is not a shift in aspectual class *per se*, but rather a ‘pragmatic shift’ in the entailment of the event’s telicity; that the endpoint has been reached is entailed in the perfective, and only implicated in the imperfective.

These facts can be accounted for straightforwardly under the present analysis in terms of selection. As imperfective  $v^0$  selects for (phasal)  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$ , we expect freer interpretations in the imperfective. This freer interpretation is contributed by aspectual manipulations introduced by  $\text{Asp}_s^0$ . Conversely, as perfective  $v^0$  directly selects for a VP, we expect no manipulations to a predicates underlying Aktionsart to be available. If perfective  $v^0$  selects only telic VPs, i.e. achievement and accomplishment predicates (e.g. Travis 2010, Nuger 2016), whereas imperfective  $v$  combines with  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$  which can either contribute a telic or an atelic interpretation, then the difference in whether the turtle’s being scared is an implicature (46a) or an entailment (46b) can be attributed to this difference in selection.

If  $\text{Asp}_s^0$  can host telicity features, then (46a) is ambiguous between an atelic or telic situation aspect interpretation. In the absence of overt situation aspect morphology, the verbal complex does not provide any indication as to whether  $\text{Asp}_s^0$  is telic or not, resulting in two ambiguous structures and a cancelable implicature that the turtle is scared. However, the sentences in (46b) must have a telic interpretation – yielding the entailment that the turtle is scared – because the overt perfective morphology indicates that the VP is telic due to its selectional restrictions.

The discussion in §3.3 has demonstrated that the selectional constraints placed on situation aspect by  $v^0$ , used to capture the aspect-based object agreement split in Palauan, are independently supported. Choice of  $v^0$  affects the presence/absence of phasal  $\text{Asp}_s\text{P}$ . Crucially, imperfective aspect requires merger of a phasal situation aspect which renders object DPs inaccessible for  $\phi$ -probing by  $v^0$ , yielding the absence of object agreement in imperfective clauses. Perfective aspect directly selects VP, rendering object DPs accessible for  $\phi$ -probing and resulting in the presence of object agreement.

## 4 DOM is about licensing

With the account of Palauan split aspect developed in §3 in hand, I now turn to discuss *er*-marking and DOM phenomena more generally. As noted at the outset, I will demonstrate that Palauan DOM, limited to the imperfective aspect, is consistent with Kalin’s (2014, 2016) recent account of the phenomenon and inconsistent with other proposals (see also Ormazabal & Romero 2013 for related discussion). In brief, Kalin proposes that DOM arises from the interaction of two factors. First, in a given language/construction, some nominals may require licensing while others do not (e.g. Massam 2001, Danon 2006). The licensing requirements (or lack thereof) of a nominal are determined by its featural specification – some features require licensing, others do not. This logic is frequently invoked in Person Case Constraint (PCC) environments and direct-inverse alignments (see Rezac 2011 for a detailed overview of such phenomena). Second, in a given language/construction some licensors are present obligatorily, others only exceptionally. Licensing heads like  $T^0$  and  $v^0$  are commonly thought to obligatorily merge. (However, in some cases only one will merge during the course of the derivation; Rezac 2011, Kalin 2014). When an obligatory nominal licensor merges in a structure, it will license the closest accessible nominal in its c-command domain, regardless of the featural specification of that nominal, i.e., regardless of whether that nominal requires licensing (e.g. Chomsky 2000, 2001). However, additional licensors may also enter the derivation, as a Last Resort (e.g. Chomsky 1981, Stowell 1981, Bobaljik 1993, Rezac 2011). It is in this context – the addition of an exceptional licensor – that DOM effects arise.

In this section, I first outline Kalin’s proposal more fully. Then, I turn to a specific investigation of Palauan *er*-marking. I demonstrate that *er*-marking is precisely an instance of exceptional nominal licenser insertion. As argued in §3, no object can be targeted for  $\phi$ -agreement in the imperfective aspect due to the presence of additional phasal structure. Given this, objects cannot be canonically licensed via AGREE with  $v^0$ , the obligatorily merged licenser. In this case, *er*, the sole preposition in the language (e.g. Dyen 1971, Josephs 1975, Georgopoulos 1991), is *exceptionally* inserted, just in case failure to do so would cause a nominal in need of licensing to go unlicensed and trigger ungrammaticality. The addition of  $P^0$  provides a local licenser to establish an AGREE relationship with the nominal in need of licensing.

#### 4.1 Fleshing out the account

Building on much previous research into the finer details of the extended nominal projection (e.g. Abney 1987, Valois 1991, Szabolcsi 1994, Lidz 2006, Danon 2011; see also Adger & Harbour 2007 *i.a.*), Kalin proposes that there are functional heads in the extended nominal projection that correspond to different points along the definiteness (1) and animacy (2) hierarchies.

(47) *Heads in the extended nominal projection* (Kalin 2016: 30)

- a. Participant (semantically encoding 1st/2nd person)
- b. Person (semantically encoding person)
- c. Human (semantically encoding humanness)
- d. Animate (semantically encoding animacy)
- e. Name (semantically encoding the property of being a proper name)
- f. Definite (semantically encoding definiteness)
- g. Specific (semantically encoding specificity)
- h. Number (semantically encoding number)

These heads are privative; when the semantic feature they encode is absent so too is the projection. The presence/absence of certain projections has implications for the presence/absence of other projections. For instance, if the nominal in question is 1st or 2nd person, the nominal will not only have a ParticipantP (47a), but also a Person, Human, and Animate projection. Similarly, if a nominal has a NameP (47e), it will also have a Definite, and Specific projection. It remains an outstanding question if all of the proposed nominal projections in (47) are present in all languages. The present implementation of (47) *does not* require adopting this strong position. It is also compatible with proposals that permit cross-linguistic variation. Certain heads in (47) may be collapsed in some languages, or not present at all.

We can manipulate an extended nominal projection like (47) to properly determine which nominals in a given language will need licensing. Specifically, by designating one of the projections as bearing a feature that *must* be Agreed with, all and only those nominals that bear that feature/projection will be targeted for DOM. For Kalin, the feature in question is an uninterpretable Case feature. I will remain agnostic as to what exactly the feature is, referring to it only as *[F]*.<sup>12</sup> However, I follow her in maintaining that no matter where nominal features are generated in the extended nominal projection, such featural specification will ultimately come to be carried by the highest nominal projection (Danon 2011; cf. Grimshaw 1991, 2005; Norris 2014). That is to say that, while nominal features might be introduced by distinct heads in the extended nominal projection, (47), those features will ‘percolate’ to the highest head in the nominal projection so that the entire feature complex is visible to external syntactic operations. This ensures that *[F]*, wherever it is introduced within the extended nominal projection, can establish syntactic dependencies with nominal-external elements in the clause.

<sup>12</sup>See, e.g., Preminger 2011, 2014; Kornfilt & Preminger 2015; Levin 2015, 2017 for arguments that Case-features can survive the derivation without valuation.

This analysis allows for both cross-linguistic variation regarding which nominals on the definiteness and/or animacy hierarchies trigger DOM, as well as cross-linguistic stability in the hierarchies themselves. Languages can differ as to where [F] is merged in the nominal, if at all. For example, in a language where only animate objects are overtly marked (e.g. Dhargari; Austin 1981), the animacy projection introduces [F]. In a language where both animate and specific objects are overtly marked (e.g. Kannada; Lidz 2006), [F] must be introduced by both the animate and specific projections – we cannot maintain that the presence of either projection implicates the presence of the other, i.e. there are specific inanimate nominals (*that book*) and non-specific animate nominals (*any boy*). Nevertheless, the logical entailments across categories capture (at least portions of) the definiteness (1) and animacy (2) hierarchies obeyed by DOM. For example, if [F] is introduced by AnimateP, then any category (e.g., human participant) that entails animacy will also have an AnimateP and concomitant [F].<sup>13</sup>

Finally, consider how nominals bearing and not bearing [F] interact with licensers. Any nominal that is closest, in terms of c-command, and accessible to an obligatorily merged licenser will serve as a target for the licenser, so long as it bears the requisite features sought by the probe. For instance, if the obligatory licenser is probing for any  $\phi$ -feature-bearing element, it has the potential to target both elements that bear [F] and those that do not bear [F] (so long as the element bears  $\phi$ -features). However, if an element in need of licensing cannot be licensed by an obligatorily merged licenser, then an exceptional licenser must enter the derivation. Since the presence of such a licenser is motivated by the need to value [F], it will only merge when needed. Gratuitous licenser insertion is disallowed, either via economy – the fewer licensers the better (Kalin 2014, 2016; cf. Chomsky 1995) – or via a Last Resort mechanism (e.g. Rezac 2011). Nominals that are not targeted by obligatory licensers *and* do not bear [F] will not permit the merger of exceptional licensers. They need not be Agreed with. Therefore, there is no motivation to insert an exceptional licenser. Again, economy considerations or the lack of a Last Resort impetus ensure the absence of unnecessary licensers.

## 4.2 *Er* is a preposition

Let us now turn to an account of *er*-marking in Palauan. First, I identify what kind of element *er* is. Until now, I have remained agnostic on this point. In the previous literature on Palauan, two general positions have been adopted. First, *er* has been claimed to uniformly be a preposition (e.g. Josephs 1975, Georgopoulos 1991, Woolford 2000). Alternatively, in a series of works, Nuger (2007, 2009, 2010, 2016) argues that *er*, only in the case where it marks the object of an imperfective clause, is a case marker. I maintain that, even in the case of DOM, *er* is a preposition.

In certain cases, *er* functions unambiguously as a P<sup>0</sup>. For instance, it marks locative adverbials:

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<sup>13</sup>The present analysis is highly reminiscent of Béjar & Rezac’s Person Licensing Condition, proposed to explain PCC effects:

- (v) *Person Licensing Condition* (Béjar & Rezac 2003: 53)  
Interpretable 1st/2nd person features must be licensed by entering into an Agree relation with an appropriate functional category.

As 1st/2nd person arguments are highest on the Definiteness Scale for DOM (1), we could intuitively maintain that all DOM patterns are triggered by ‘extended’ PLC-like statements, and in fact, Rezac’s (2011) treatment of Dependent Case phenomena as an analogue of PCC repairs comes quite close to collapsing PCC and DOM phenomena. Kalin (2014, 2016) acknowledges this connection between PCC and DOM effects, noting that an ‘extended’ PLC approach to DOM faces some complications with respect to the behavior of DOM in Senaya (Neo-Aramaic). Namely, specific objects which trigger DOM can be licensed via  $\phi$ -agreement with auxiliaries, but 1st/2nd person objects cannot. It is not immediately clear if this is should be taken as evidence against an ‘extended’ PLC or an idiosyncrasy of Senaya participant arguments.

- (48) a. Ak ulemechar er tia el siats **er a Merilang**.  
 1SG= buy.PST ER this L shirt P D Manila  
 ‘I bought this shirt in Manila.’  
 b. Ak ulemechar er tia el siats **er a iungs er a Marialas**.  
 1SG= buy.PST ER this L shirt P D islands P D Marianas  
 ‘I bought this shirt in the Mariana islands.’ [Nuger 2016: 116]

It introduces possessors:<sup>14</sup>

- (49) a. Ak mo omekedong a katuu **er tirke el chad**.  
 1SG= AUX.FUT call.IPFV DET cats P those L people  
 ‘I will call those people’s cats.’  
 b. Ng so-al a redil a chazi **er aike el kuabang**.  
 3SG= desire-3SGP DET woman DET taste P those L guava  
 ‘The woman likes the taste of those guavas.’ [Nuger 2016: 114-5]

Finally, it introduces obliques as part of the expression *el mo er* ‘to go to’:

- (50) a. A Ioseb a ulemekall er a mli-l el mo **er a bli-k**.  
 DET I. TOP drive.PST ER DET car-3SGP L go P D house-1SGP  
 ‘Joseph drove his car to my house.’  
 b. Ng ulemekall er a mli-l a Ioseb el mo **er a ngii di el beluu?**  
 3SG= drive.PST ER DET car-3SGP DET I. L go P DET any L place  
 ‘Did Joseph drive his car anywhere?’ [Nuger 2016: 115-6]

In all of the contexts above, given common assumptions about the role of prepositions, it is reasonable to conclude that *er* is functioning as a preposition. The most parsimonious treatment of *er* in DOM contexts is to treat it as a preposition, as well (Josephs 1975, Georgopoulos 1991, Woolford 2000). I adopt the position, noting that no empirical diagnostic that could tease apart case morphology from prepositions in Palauan has yet to be determined (cf., e.g., Demonte 1987 on Spanish),

It must be noted that there is a crucial difference between *er* in the cases above and *er* in DOM. When *er* functions as an unambiguous P<sup>0</sup>, it is insensitive to the featural specification of its DP-complement – *er* is insensitive to number (48), animacy (49), and specificity (50). When *er* marks the object of an imperfective clause, it is sensitive to number, animacy, and specificity (11). Nuger (2007 *et seq.*) seizes upon this difference to motivate an alternative account of *er* in DOM contexts as (accusative) case.

Furthermore, he argues against an analysis of verbs in imperfective clauses as taking (base-generated) PP-complements. On such an account, imperfective verbs would take PP-complements because they cannot Case-license DP-complements. Nuger notes that such an account cannot be extended to ECM/SOR constructions. Recall that ECM/SOR predicates display an aspect split as well. In the perfective, they display

<sup>14</sup> It is possible to introduce possessors without *er*, so long as possessor agreement is realized on the possessum (vi):

- (vi) a. A Melii a melemed a tebel-**ir** tirke el chad.  
 DET M. TOP wipe.off.IPFV DET tables-3PL.+HP those L people  
 ‘Melii is wiping off those people’s tables.’  
 b. A Droteo a manged a rechel-**ir** aike el kerrekar.  
 DET D. TOP cut.off.IPFV DET branches-3PL.-HP those L trees  
 ‘Droteo is cutting off those trees’ branches.’ [Nuger 2016: 114]

This pattern is strikingly similar to the behavior of direct objects which are either introduced via *er*-marking or object agreement. However, unlike direct objects, *er*-marking on possessors occurs regardless of the feature specification of the possessor. For instance, non-human plural objects do not trigger *er*-marking (8b), but non-human plural possessors are nevertheless introduced with *er* (50b). I leave further investigation of this connection to future work.

object agreement with the embedded subject (51a). In the imperfective, the embedded subject bears *er* (51b).

- (51) a. Ak mo        **rul-leterir**                    a re-chad er a Ekipten el mo  
 1SG= AUX.FUT make.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET PL-person P DET Egypt L AUX.FUT  
 mengull er a re-ched-ak.  
 respect.IPFV ER DET PL-person-1SGP  
 ‘I will make the Egyptians respect my people.’ [=(16)]
- b. Kom mengiil **er** a re-chad er a Ekipten el mo oltobed a kuruma  
 2PL= expect.IPFV **ER** DET PL-person P DET Egypt L AUX.FUT take.out.IPFV DET chariots  
 me a re-chad er a uos el mei!  
 and DET PL-person P DET horse L come  
 ‘You expect the Egyptians to send you chariots and cavalry!’ [=(10)]

For the base-generated PP account to hold, we must permit PPs to not only be generated in Compl-V but also to be generated in Spec-*v*P. This overgenerates, predicting that in *all* non-finite clauses, PP subjects should be exceptionally licensed, contrary to fact. Nuger thus concludes, based on sensitivity to the featural specification of its complement and its ability to occur on subjects embedded under ECM/SOR predicates, that the treatment of *er* as a P<sup>0</sup>, in DOM environments, is untenable.

I believe this conclusion was reached too hastily. Data like (51) mitigate against a base-generation account of *er*-marked nominals as PPs. However, they do not provide evidence against an exceptional insertion account, i.e. an account in which *er* is inserted to license a nominal just in case it would go unlicensed and trigger ungrammaticality otherwise. On this view, we expect the featural specification of the DP-complement of *er* to matter, because it is the featural specification of the DP that indicates whether or not the nominal needs licensing. Furthermore, we can limit *er*-marked subjects to ECM/SOR contexts, because it is this context that licenses (overt) DP subjects in non-finite environments. Other non-finite contexts do not permit (overt) DP subjects. Without a DP subject in need of licensing, *er* can never be exceptionally inserted. I pursue an account of *er*-marking along these lines in §4.3 and demonstrate in §5 that Nuger’s approach to DOM, as well as others’, are independently problematic.<sup>15</sup>

### 4.3 Capturing Palauan DOM

Now recall the distribution of *er* on objects in imperfective clauses (11), repeated below:

(52) *Distribution of ‘er’-marking*

	HUMAN		NON-HUMAN	
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL
SPECIFIC	<i>er</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>er</i>	∅
NON-SPECIFIC	<i>er</i>	<i>er</i>	∅	∅

In order to capture this distribution, I posit the following loci of [F]:

(53) *Distribution of [F] in Palauan*

- a. HumanP bears [F]
- b. SpecificP bears [F]

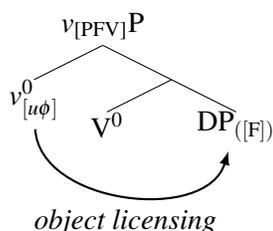
<sup>15</sup>Coon (2013) suggests that in some languages non-perfective clauses are formed by base-generating PPs in the place of DP objects (e.g. Adyghe, Georgian, Samoan and Warrungu), as opposed to the addition of extra phasal structure within the extended verbal projection. However, given Nuger’s (2016) argument from ECM/SOR we can be sure that Palauan is not such a language.

As HumanP bears [F] (53a), nominals which implicate the presence of HumanP, including 1st/2nd and 3rd person human pronouns, will also bear [F]. Similarly, as SpecificP bears [F] (53b), nominals which implicate the presence of SpecificP, including definites, names, etc., will also bear [F]. As mentioned above, however, we must maintain that both HumanP and SpecificP bear [F], because non-specific human objects, e.g. *ngii di el chad* ‘any person’ (6c), and specific non-human objects, e.g. *se el hong* ‘that book’ (8a), still trigger *er*-marking. (And note that the presence of either SpecificP or HumanP does not, in and of itself, implicate the presence of the other.) Adopting this position ensures that all human objects and all specific objects will trigger the insertion of an exceptional licenser if they cannot be canonically licensed. At first blush, (53) would seem to overgenerate *er*-marked DPs. Plural non-human specific objects are expected to trigger *er*-marking, contrary to fact (52). I address this concern below in §4.4.

First, I provide sample derivations to illustrate how the present proposal captures the attested patterns of aspect-conditioned DOM in Palauan. Recall that in §3.2, we accounted for the co-variation of the presence/absence of object agreement with perfective/imperfective viewpoint aspect as follows: In the perfective aspect,  $v_{[PFV]}^0$  selects a VP. The VP and its contents including the direct object, are visible to  $\phi$ -probing from  $v^0$  and object agreement occurs. In the imperfective aspect,  $v_{[IPFV]}^0$  selects a phasal  $Asp_s^0$ . Therefore, the VP sister to  $Asp_s^0$ , and the direct object, are not visible to  $\phi$ -probing from  $v^0$  and object agreement is blocked.

Consider how this proposal interacts with whether or not the object DP bears [F]. I discuss perfective clauses, which do not display DOM, first. Object agreement in perfective clauses is diagrammed in (54), where the notation ([F]) is meant to indicate that [F] may or may not be present based on the specific featural specification of the object DP.

(54) *Perfective object licensing*



In the perfective aspect, the obligatorily merged licenser –  $v^0$  – can probe the object DP for  $\phi$ -features, regardless of whether that DP bears [F] or not. This probing results in the realization of object agreement morphology on the verb, and, as an added consequence, brings those DPs which *do* bear [F] into a requisite AGREE relationship within the clause. In this way, *all* object DPs are Agreed with in the perfective aspect and those that bear [F] are licensed. *Er*-marking never occurs in the perfective aspect, because additional licensers need not be added to the derivation. The obligatorily present  $v^0$  does the job. Economy considerations or the lack of a need for a Last Resort licensing mechanism ensures that perfective clauses with *er*-marked objects will be ruled out.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> An anonymous reviewer observes that another environment in which *er*-marking is *not* attested is on predicative nominals:

(vii) Ng malk / beras / ngikel.  
3SG= chicken / rice / fish  
‘It’s chicken / rice / fish.’

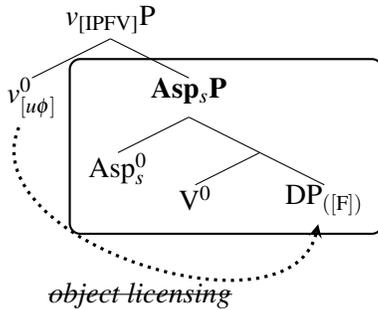
(viii) Ng kau [a mo chuarm].  
3SG= you DET AUX.FUT INTR.suffer  
‘The one who will suffer is you.’

[adapted from Nuger 2016: 16]

As expected in the absence of  $\phi$ -agreement, non-human non-specific predicative nominals, (vii), do not display *er*-marking, but strikingly neither do human predicative nominals, (viii). Similar patterns are found in nearby Micronesian languages, whereby

Now consider imperfective clauses. Failed object licensing, via  $\phi$ -agreement, is illustrated below:

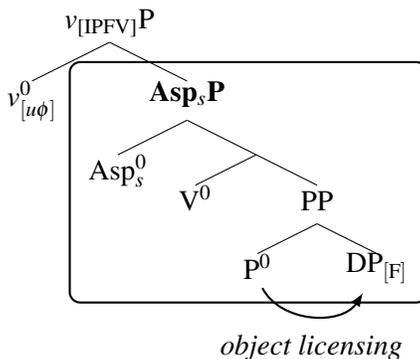
(55) *Failed imperfective object licensing*



Unlike perfective aspect, imperfective aspect selects a phasal situation aspect. This distinction straightforwardly captures the absence of object  $\phi$ -agreement. However, it also blocks licensing of those DPs that bear [F]. It is in this environment that the presence/absence of [F] plays a role. If the DP in (55) *does not* bear [F], i.e. if it is non-human non-specific, it will not need licensing and the derivation can converge, without  $\phi$ -agreement or *er*-marking. *Er*-marking will, in fact, be ruled out due to Economy or Last Resort concerns, as mentioned above.

However, if the DP in (55) *does* bear [F], i.e. if it is human and/or specific, the derivation cannot converge. Failure to license the DP will induce ungrammaticality. An exceptional licenser must be added. In this environment, the preposition *er* is added to establish a local AGREE relationship and license the object, as in (56):

(56) *Successful imperfective object licensing*



*Er*-marking, on this view, is analogous to (certain treatments of) English *Of*-Insertion (e.g. Chomsky 1981,

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object cross-referencing morphology present in transitive clauses does not cross-reference predicative nominals (see e.g. Benton 1968 on Chuukese and Sohn 1975 on Woleaian). There are at least two ways to explain these facts. First, predicative nominal constructions like perfective constructions may permit canonical nominal licensing, cf. (54). In this case, the human pronoun *kau* 'you' in (54b) would bear [F] and stand in an AGREE relationship with a local functional head (possibly  $Pred^0$ ), as [F] is licensed by this head, *er*-marking is unnecessary (see e.g. Baker 2008). Crucially, unlike pronominal objects in perfective constructions this licensing relationship neither results in the realization of object  $\phi$ -agreement nor forces the pronominal to be null, cf. (14). This second point of variation is also found in Micronesian languages (see Hattori 2012 for an overview). Alternatively, *er*-marking may not occur if predicative nominals differ from nominals in argument position in that they lack the functional architecture thought to bear [F]. On this treatment, *er*-marking would never occur, because the nominals in question need not be licensed. I leave further research into this matter for future work.

Stowell 1981) or Rezac’s (2011) proposal for PCC repairs via P<sup>0</sup>-Insertion.<sup>17</sup> The insertion of *er* provides those DPs bearing [F], which would induce ungrammaticality without licensing, with a local licenser just in case the obligatory licenser,  $v^0$ , cannot target them. Because *er* is inserted only when needed, it is necessarily limited to the imperfective aspect and to DPs that are human and/or specific.

Note that the present analysis can immediately be extended to capture the behavior of subjects embedded under ECM/SOR predicates and indirect objects, as well. As noted in §2, these arguments also display object agreement and *er*-marking, in the perfective and imperfective aspect respectively. First consider ECM/SOR subjects (57):

- (57) a. Ak mo rul-**leterir** a re-chad er a Ekipten el mo  
 1SG= AUX.FUT make.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET PL-person P DET Egypt L AUX.FUT  
 mengull er a re-ched-ak.  
 respect.IPFV ER DET PL-person-1SGP  
 ‘I will make the Egyptians respect my people.’ [= (16)]
- b. Kom mengiil **er** a re-chad er a Ekipten el mo oltobed a kuruma  
 2PL= expect.IPFV P DET PL-person P DET Egypt L AUX.FUT take.out.IPFV DET chariots  
 me a re-chad er a uos el mei!  
 and DET PL-person P DET horse L come  
 ‘You expect the Egyptians to send you chariots and cavalry!’ [= (10)]

Like transitive objects, subjects embedded under ECM/SOR predicates display object agreement in the perfective (57a) and *er*-marking in the imperfective (57b). If subjects embedded under ECM/SOR predicates in Palauan enter into syntactic dependencies with *matrix*  $v^0$ , much in the same way that subjects embedded under ECM/SOR predicates in English do (e.g. Postal 1974, Johnson 1991, Lasnik & Saito 1991), we expect to see identical patterns of object agreement and *er*-marking. In the perfective, matrix  $v^0$  successfully targets the embedded subject, yielding object agreement morphology on the matrix predicate, cf. (54). In the imperfective, matrix  $v^0$  cannot target the embedded subject, due to the presence of additional, phasal structure at matrix Asp,P. If the embedded subject bears [F], *er* will be exceptionally inserted to license it, cf. (56). Crucially, *er* will not be inserted to license subjects embedded within full CPs (or matrix subjects). These arguments can be licensed by embedded and matrix T<sup>0</sup>, respectively, and so there is no need to insert *er* due to Last Resort or Economy concerns.

ECM/SOR subjects pattern like direct objects in another important respect; they are realized immediately adjacent to the matrix verb. Nuger notes that this behavior *may* be indicative of movement of the embedded subject into the matrix clause. Palauan has fairly rigid VOS word order. If movement of the embedded subject into the matrix clause is responsible for placing it in a matrix verb-adjacent position, as opposed to the canonical clause final position of embedded subjects, we must ask how that movement can occur regardless of matrix viewpoint aspect. I tentatively claim that the matrix verb itself, V<sup>0</sup>, triggers movement of the embedded subject into the matrix clause. Matrix V<sup>0</sup> is also implicated in English subject-to-object raising (e.g. Postal 1974, Johnson 1991, Lasnik & Saito 1991). Crucially, movement to Spec-VP places the embedded subject in the matrix clause, accounting for its verb-adjacent position while simultaneously keeping inaccessible to  $\phi$ -probing by matrix  $v^0$  in imperfective clauses.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup>I direct the reader to Rezac (2011) for the details of a cyclicity-obeying approach to P<sup>0</sup>-Insertion, as well as discussion of other environments in which exceptional licenser insertion occurs.

<sup>18</sup>One might wonder if what I have been referring to as ECM/SOR predicates might in fact be better analyzed as object control or proleptic object constructions. On either of these alternatives, the behavior of the putative ‘embedded subject’ would be unsurprising, as the argument in question would in fact serve as the object of the matrix clause and only stand in a co-reference relationship with the embedded (null) subject. Despite these *prima facie* plausible alternatives, there are reasons to doubt their validity. First, Nuger (2010, 2016) demonstrates that the embedded subject does not receive a  $\theta$ -role from the matrix predicate, suggesting the object control analysis (but not the prolepsis analysis) is not correct. More strikingly, he demonstrates that only when

Now consider ditransitive constructions. As noted above, perfective ditransitives display  $\phi$ -agreement with the indirect object; the direct object is neither (overtly) Agreed with, nor *er*-marked, regardless of feature specification (58a). Imperfective ditransitives can display *er*-marking on either object, depending on their feature specification. In (58b), both internal arguments are *er*-marked.

- (58) a. Ak mils-**terir** a reschelik a hong.  
 1SG= give.PST.PFV-**3PL.+HO** DET friends DET book  
 ‘I gave my friends a book / the book.’ [= (15)]
- b. A Romana a omeka **er** a rengalek **er** a kukau.  
 DET R. TOP feed.IPFV **P** DET children **P** DET taro  
 ‘Romana is feeding the children the taro.’ [= (9)]

As alluded to in fn. 6, we can explain this pattern by appealing to MULTIPLE AGREE (e.g. Anagnostopoulou 2005, Nevins 2011; see also Hiraiwa 2001, 2005), whereby a single  $\phi$ -probe targets multiple  $\phi$ -bearers, under certain conditions. In this case,  $v^0$  may target both the indirect and direct objects. In the perfective, *both* arguments of the double object construction are successfully targeted by  $\phi$ -agreement in (58a). As a result, if either (or both) argument bears [F], it will be licensed via AGREE, cf. (54). Conditions on the exponence of the result of multiple  $\phi$ -agreement relations then limit the overt realization of MULTIPLE AGREE so that only the indirect object’s  $\phi$ -features are cross-referenced on the verb. In the imperfective,  $v^0$  cannot successfully target either internal argument for the purposes of  $\phi$ -agreement, due to the presence of additional, phasal structure at Asp<sub>S</sub>P. If either internal argument bears [F], *er* will be exceptionally inserted to license it, cf. (56). In the case of (58b), both arguments bear [F] – they are human and specific, respectively – resulting in both being *er*-marked.

Some preliminary evidence in favor of the MULTIPLE AGREE account sketched above comes from restrictions on the order of internal arguments in perfective ditransitive constructions. Verbs like ‘help’, ‘teach’, ‘tell’, and ‘give’ canonically take two arguments in Palauan. Josephs (1975) observes that while the canonical order of internal arguments is indirect object–direct object, the order of arguments can, in some instances, be reversed (59). This pattern is similar to English dative shift although the form of arguments is insensitive to word order. In the following examples, the indirect object appears in bold face; the direct object in italics.

- (59) a. Ak mils-a a **Helen** a *omiange*.  
 1SG= give.PST.PFV-SG.+HO DET H. DET souvenir  
 ‘I gave Helen a souvenir.’
- b. Ak mils-a a *omiange* a **Helen**.  
 1SG= givePST.PFV-SG.+HO DET souvenir DET H.  
 ‘I gave a souvenir to Helen.’ [Josephs 1975: 347]

Example (59a) displays the canonical word order whereby the indirect object *a Helen* precedes the direct object *a omiange* ‘souvenir’. In (59b), the order of internal arguments is permuted. The direct object precedes the indirect object. However, not all combinations of internal arguments demonstrate the same word order flexibility. Josephs reports that, for many speakers, plural indirect objects *must* precede singular direct objects:

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the embedded clause is non-finite does the logical subject of that clause behave as a matrix object, triggering object agreement and appearing adjacent to the matrix verb. If the putative ECM/SOR subject were always base-generated in the matrix clause, we would not expect such sensitivity to finiteness of the embedded clause. A prolepsis account is also ruled out, precisely because *er*-marking is not uniform (57). As noted in §4.2, when *er* acts as an unambiguous preposition it appears regardless of the aspectual specification of the clause, this would be expected if *er* were to introduce a proleptic argument, contrary to fact. I thank the editor and an anonymous reviewer for helpful discussion of this point.

- (60) a. Ak mils-terir a **reschelik** a hong.  
 1SG= give.PST.PFV-3PL.+HO DET friends DET book  
 ‘I gave my friends a book / the book.’ [= (15)]
- b. %Ak mils-terir a hong a **reschelik**.  
 1SG= give.PST.PFV-3PL.+HO DET book DET friends  
 ‘I gave a book to my friends.’ [Josephs 1975: 348]

Crucially, *this restriction is limited to the perfective aspect*. When a ditransitive verb appears in the imperfective, either ordering of plural indirect object and singular direct object is permitted:

- (61) a. A Toki a olisechakl **er a rengalek** a tekoi er a Merikel.  
 DET T. TOP teach.IPFV ER DET children DET words P DET America  
 ‘Toki is teaching the pupils English.’
- b. A Toki a olisechakl a tekoi er a Merikel **er a rengalek**.  
 DET T. TOP teach.IPFV DET words P DET America ER DET children  
 ‘Toki is teaching English to the pupils.’ [Josephs 1975: 515]

The indirect object precedes the direct object in (61a), while it follows the direct object in (61b).

This restriction is a natural consequence of the MULTIPLE AGREE proposal offered above: For the purposes of this discussion, I will assume that the order of internal arguments reflects asymmetric c-command, i.e. the internal argument to the left is also structurally higher than the internal argument to the right. Moreover, I assume that this configuration is achieved below  $v^0$  such that both arguments are in the domain of the object  $\phi$ -probe, yielding a MULTIPLE AGREE configuration. Lastly, I remain agnostic as to whether these configurations are generated by base-generation or movement. As suggested by Anagnostopoulou (2005), MULTIPLE AGREE relationships require that the second target of agreement not bear any  $\phi$ -features not already present on the first target. On the assumption that number is privative (e.g. Harley & Ritter 2002). This will rule out MULTIPLE AGREE from holding when singular direct objects, which lack number-features, c-command plural indirect objects, which bear number-features, as in (60b). If MULTIPLE AGREE does not hold in (60b), the human indirect object, bearing [F], will not be licensed, yielding ungrammaticality. The opposite configuration, whereby the plural indirect object c-commands the singular direct object, (60a), is licit for MULTIPLE AGREE, and both arguments can be licensed; the second goal, in this case the direct object, *does not* bear any additional features. In (60), when both internal arguments have the same  $\phi$ -features, either order is expected to yield a licit MULTIPLE AGREE relationship, licensing any instances of [F]. In the imperfective, (61), MULTIPLE AGREE can never obtain. Both internal arguments are inaccessible to  $\phi$ -probing from  $v^0$ . Therefore, either order of arguments is licit regardless of their  $\phi$ -features, and any instances of [F] will be licensed by *er*-marking. In the case of (61), the human indirect object ‘children’ bears [F] and triggers *er*-marking, regardless of its position relative to the direct object. The non-human plural indirect object ‘English’ does not trigger *er*-marking, as expected, regardless of its position with respect to the direct object. Thus, the data in (60–62) present some initial support for the view that both internal arguments of perfective ditransitive constructions are Agreed with and licensed by  $v^0$ . More research is needed to confirm that additional predictions of the MULTIPLE AGREE treatment hold, however I leave this for future work.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Josephs (1975) offers an alternative explanation of the degraded example (61b) in terms of sentence processing. He posits that the presence of a singular noun *a hong* ‘a book’ immediately after the 3rd person human plural object agreement marker is difficult to parse. The evaluation of the validity of this alternative must also be left for future work.

#### 4.4 Plural non-human objects

The present account captures most of the distribution of *er*. It effectively limits it to the imperfective aspect, and ensures that all human objects and singular specific non-human objects will bear *er*. However, it also predicts that *plural* specific non-human objects will also bear *er*, contrary to fact (52). In this section, I suggest that the lack of *er*-marking should be viewed as a limited morphological irregularity, instead of evidence that plural specific non-human DPs do not bear [F]. That is to say that such nominals are *er*-marked in the narrow syntax, but that *er*-marking is unpronounced as in (62).

- (62) ‘*Er*’-deletion  
 $er \rightarrow \emptyset / \text{--- DP}_{[PL, -H]}$

There are both conceptual and empirical reasons for adopting this position.

First, I know of no other language that makes use of number specification in the determination of DOM (see also Aissen 2003). Therefore, adopting (62) brings Palauan in line with other DOM languages in being sensitive to only definiteness and/or animacy. Specifically, as suggested above, Palauan is a DOM system sensitive to humanness and specificity. Moreover, with regard to number, plural is (syntactically) more marked than singular (e.g. Harley & Ritter 2002). At least descriptively, overt marking in DOM languages always appears on more marked nominals (e.g. Aissen 2003). Therefore, if a DOM language were to be sensitive to number, we might expect plural, not singular, nominals to be overtly marked – the mirror image of the pattern that is attested in Palauan.

Second, the present analysis can be used to offer an explanation for the behavior of *er*-marking in coordination (cf. Nuger 2016). The (overt) presence/absence of *er* to mark a coordinated object is determined by the featural specification of the first conjunct.

- (63) a. Ak milengang **er** se el ringngo me aike el tuu.  
 1SG= eat.IPFV P that L apple and those L banana  
 ‘I was eating that apple and those bananas.’  
 b. Ak milengang aike el tuu me (**\*er**) se el ringngo.  
 1SG= eat.IPFV those L banana and (**\*P**) that L apple  
 ‘I was eating those bananas and that apple.’ [Nuger 2016: 144]

When the first conjunct is singular and specific (63a), *er*-marking proceeds the coordinated DP. When the first conjunct is plural specific non-human (63b), *er*-marking does not proceed the coordinated DP, nor does it mark the second, singular specific conjunct only. This is despite the fact that, in isolation, the same DP would trigger *er*-marking. This pattern can be explained as follows: Within a coordination construction, one instance of *er*-marking applied to the entire DP is sufficient to license [F] on any conjunct that might bear it. Given Palauan word order, the sole instance of *er*-marking will appear to the left of the entire coordination, as in (63a). Adopting this position, we expect *er* to be unable to be realized within the coordination, as in (63b). However, if the first conjunct of the coordinate DP is a non-human plural, (62) will apply and delete *er* in the post-syntax. On this view, *er* can successfully license both of the specific DPs in (63b), including the singular ‘that apple’, while simultaneously going unpronounced. On the view that *er* is absent in (63b) both morphologically *and* syntactically, the licensing of the second conjunct would remain a mystery.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup>An alternative explanation for the inability to realize *er* within the coordination would be to treat the coordinator *me* as a comitative. The comitative P<sup>0</sup> could then be seen to license the second ‘conjunct’ directly. There is some reason to reject this position. First, I know of no instance outside of coordination in which *me* is used. If *me* were a comitative PP, we would expect it to surface in other positions, e.g. as a VP adjunct. Furthermore, *me* is able to coordinate non-DP phrases.

- (ix) a. Ak mle smecher **me** ng dimlak k-bo er a skuul.  
 1SG= AUX.PST sick **and** 3SG= NEG.PST 1SS-go P DET school  
 ‘I was sick, and I didn’t go to school.’

In perfective clauses, coordinated DPs display closest conjunct agreement. The  $\phi$ -features of the conjunct that is closer to the predicate – in this case, the left conjunct – are reflected on the verb, rather than some combination of the  $\phi$ -features of both conjuncts:

- (64) a. Ak mo **kol-ii** / \*kmang se el ringngo me aike el tuu.  
 1SG= AUX.FUT **eat.PFV-3SGO** / \*eat.PFV.3PL.-HO that L apple and those L banana  
 ‘I am going to eat (up) that apple and those bananas.’
- b. Ak mo **kmang** / \*kol-ii aike el tuu me se el ringngo.  
 1SG= AUX.FUT **eat.PFV.3PL.-HO** / \*eat.PFV-3SGO those L banana and that L apple  
 ‘I am going to eat (up) those bananas and that apple.’ [Nuger 2016: 144-5]

When the first conjunct is 3rd person singular, 3rd person singular object agreement morphology (-*ii*) is realized on the verb (64a). When the first conjunct is 3rd person plural, 3rd person plural object agreement morphology (- $\emptyset$ ) is realized on the verb (64b). These data are also consistent with the present proposal so long as it is maintained that closest conjunct agreement targets the entire coordinated DP within the narrow syntax, licensing any instances of [F] within the coordinated DP, followed by a subsequent mismatch between the target of  $\phi$ -agreement and the realization of  $\phi$ -feature morphology (e.g. Badecker 2007, Bošković 2009, Bhatt & Walkow 2013). That is to say that, at least for the purposes of licensing, the entire coordinated DP is Agreed with. As with *er*-marking in the imperfective, I maintain that one instance of  $\phi$ -agreement, targeting the entire coordination, is sufficient to license any instance of [F] within the coordination. This syntactic dependency is subsequently obscured by the morphology, which only cross-references the  $\phi$ -features of the left conjunct.

In total, the present proposal is capable of accounting for the distribution of *er*-marking in Palauan. In §3, I argued that canonical object licensing – AGREE with  $v^0$  – takes place in the perfective and not in the imperfective. If human and specific nominals must be licensed, then an alternative licensing strategy must be employed in the imperfective. *Er*-marking is preposition insertion triggered by the need to license [F]-bearing nominals. Only non-human non-specific arguments lack [F]. However, *er*-marking is obscured on plural non-human specific arguments because *er* is systematically deleted before such arguments.

## 5 Against alternative approaches to DOM

Having demonstrated that a licensing approach to DOM can successfully capture the facts of Palauan, I consider alternative approaches to DOM. I show that such alternatives cannot successfully explain the full range of Palauan data. At present, I will not discuss OT approaches to DOM in any great detail (e.g. Aissen 2003, de Hoop & Malchukov 2008, Keine & Müller 2008). See Kalin (2016) for a critique of such approaches.<sup>21</sup>

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- b. A Droteo a ngalek er a skuul **me** a Toki a sensei.  
 DET D. TOP child P DET school **and** DET T. TOP TEACHER  
 ‘Droteo is a student and Toki is a teacher.’

[Josephs 1990: 141]

If *me* were a comitative  $P^0$ , it would be difficult to explain its ability to select non-DP-complements.

<sup>21</sup>Woolford (2000) offers an OT syntax approach to DOM in Palauan. As noted in §2.3, her account is untenable in light of data that demonstrates that singular non-human non-specific subjects trigger  $\phi$ -agreement but not *er*-marking. I leave it to future research to determine if other OT approaches to Palauan object marking are viable.



describe the morphological realization of all possible aspect and object  $\phi$ -feature values. In particular, there is no Vocabulary Insertion rule for perfective verbs whose object is plural non-human. Furthermore, there are no rules for imperfective verbs at all. This approach succeeds at capturing the object agreement split in Palauan insofar as it hardwires its realization into the morphology of the language.

While this approach encodes the facts of Palauan – imperfective verbs and perfective verbs with plural non-human objects never display object agreement morphology – it provides no *explanation* for why this pattern is attested, unlike the account provided above in §3.2. Under a purely morphological account of split-aspect, it is completely accidental that overt  $\phi$ -agreement is paired with perfective aspect; it could have just as easily been paired with the imperfective aspect, yielding the reverse pattern of overt (and covert) object agreement. More generally, if aspect splits of the kind found in Palauan, Basque, Gujarati and Archi were simply conditioned by morphophonological idiosyncrasy, we would expect the reverse patterns, where overt  $\phi$ -agreement is paired with imperfective aspect only, quite frequently. Such patterns are, to my knowledge, unattested, at least when aspect based-splits are attributable to the presence of additional phasal structure (cf. Kalin & Van Urk 2014).<sup>22</sup>

Appeals to iconicity also face problems in explaining why subjects embedded under ECM/SOR predicates should show the same pattern of DOM. If DOM is (in part) about indicating the objecthood of those arguments that less canonically serve as objects, it is a mystery why the same conditions should be applied to subjects. An anonymous reviewer wonders if this argument hinges on the specific treatment of ECM/SOR constructions. As far as I can tell treating these constructions either as ECM constructions, in which the embedded subject remains within the embedded clause, or as SOR constructions, in which the embedded subject raises into the matrix VP is inconsequential. Iconicity requires reference to grammatical function, not just syntactic position (Aissen 2003, Keine & Müller 2008). Under either treatment, the *er*-marked element in question is *not* functioning as a theme, patient, etc. Its grammatical function is that of subject. As predicted by iconicity-based approaches it should pattern differently than direct objects which do function as themes, patients, etc, contrary fact.

## 5.2 Movement accounts

A second family of accounts of DOM propose that the phenomenon arises due to movement of certain objects, those that will come to be overtly marked, out of VP. The reasons for this movement vary. It may be triggered in order to escape existential closure (e.g. Diesing 1992), to check the case projection ( $K^0$ ) (López 2012), or to add additional, functional architecture to the nominal, resulting in its definite(/animate) interpretation (e.g. Sportiche 1998). Whatever the reason for this movement, it results in the formation of a more local relationship between the moved object and functional heads, as well as other nominals, higher along the clausal spine. Therefore, this movement may bring the object into a local relationship with a higher Case-licenser (e.g. Merchant 2006, Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007; cf. Woolford 2000). It may bring the object into a local relationship with the subject, yielding case competition and dependent case assignment to the object (or subject) (e.g. Baker & Vinokurova 2010, Baker 2015, Coon & Preminger 2017). Alternatively, this closeness may result in the addition of functional architecture (namely KP) so that the object can remain ‘distinct’ from the subject for the purposes of linearization (Richards 2010).

As an illustration of a movement-based account of DOM, consider these data from Sakha (Russia, Turkic):

- (67) a. Masha salamaat-\*(y) turgennik sie-te  
 M. porridge-\*(ACC) quickly eat-PST.3SS  
 ‘Masha ate the porridge quickly.’

<sup>22</sup>See Coon 2013 §5.4.3 for a discussion of some apparent “counteruniversal” aspect-splits that nevertheless obey the generalization that non-canonical case/agreement patterns are associated with the presence of additional phasal structure.

- b. Masha *turgennik* salamaat-(#y) sie-te  
 M. *quickly* porridge-(#ACC) eat-PST.3SS  
 ‘Masha ate porridge quickly.’

[Baker & Vinokurova 2010: 602]

In Sakha, accusative case marking, object definiteness/specificity, and object position with respect to VP-level adverbs all co-vary. Only definite/specific objects move high enough in the clause to receive accusative case. Movement of the object is transparently indicated by its position relative to adverb ‘quickly’ that marks the VP-edge. When the object does not move, accusative case is not assigned. In this way, object position and object marking are both conditioned by object interpretation.

The presence of *er*-marking in the absence of object agreement indicates that a movement approach cannot capture the Palauan data. Recall that Palauan shows object agreement in the perfective and simultaneously no *er*-marking. Conversely, in the imperfective it shows *er*-marking and no object agreement. If anything, object agreement should indicate that the object in a perfective clause is in a *more local* relationship with functional heads higher along the clausal spine, i.e. looking solely at object agreement, it could be concluded that perfective object DPs move, while imperfective object DPs do not. However, as *er*-marking is limited to the imperfective, it would have to be concluded that it arises just in case movement *does not* occur. This is the exact opposite result as would be expected from a movement based account of DOM.

A response to this conclusion might be to maintain that *er*-marking is triggered by movement, but that its exponence is restricted. Namely, *er*-marking is only pronounced in the imperfective. This is essentially a retreat to the morphophonological accounts discussed in §5.1. In the case of Palauan, Nuger (2016) proposes that Case-assignment targets all nominals and that the realization of *er*, as accusative case, is triggered by the featural specification (including aspect) of the Case-marked DP. A movement based account could maintain that only those nominals that receive *er*-marking in the imperfective are ever Case-licensed, regardless of aspect. This could be attributed to a distinction in movement based on the object DP. However, such an account would still need to employ a morphophonological restriction. Those nominals that are Case-marked can only realize that case morphology in the imperfective. Similarly, object agreement realization would need to be constrained to the perfective aspect. Like other morphophonological accounts, this proposal faces the same problem of restrictiveness. It is an accident of the language that *er*-marking is limited to the imperfective, and object agreement to the perfective.

A second, admittedly minor, reason for dismissing the movement account of DOM for Palauan *er*-marking is the observation that there is no visible movement of *er*-marked DPs. Objects must immediately follow the verb, regardless of *er*-marking (Nuger 2016).

- (68) a. \*Te blechoel el meruul a re-mechas a kall.  
 3PL.+H= always L make.IPFV DET PL-old.woman DET food  
 ‘The old women always prepare food.’

- b. \*Te mle bleketakl el olekebai a re-sensei er a ngalek.  
 3PL.+H= AUX.PST openly L restrain.IPFV DET PL-teacher P DET child  
 ‘The teachers openly held the child back.’

[Nuger 2016: 105]

If Palauan’s VOS word order is achieved via VP-fronting (*contra* Waters 1980; Georgopoulos 1986, 1991), we might expect *er*-marked DPs to undergo (possibly optional) movement out of the VP, before VP-fronting occurs (cf., e.g., Paul 2000 on Malagasy, Massam 2001 on Niuean). Such movement would yield the possibility of VSO, or at least VXOS, strings for *er*-marked objects, but not for objects without *er*, which have presumably not undergone movement. On this view, (68a) would be ungrammatical, but (68b) would be well-formed, contrary to fact. That such variable word order is not permitted might suggest that movement has not taken place, regardless of *er*-marking. Of course, it may also be the case that the movement that has occurred is string vacuous, and crucially not high enough to alter VO adjacency.

## 6 Conclusion

The present paper has argued that Palauan aspect-conditioned DOM must be modeled as a licensing phenomenon, in which only a subset of nominals must enter into a syntactic dependency within the clause, modeled here as AGREE. The presence/absence of object agreement based on viewpoint aspect arises because the syntax of non-perfective aspect is more structurally complex than that of the perfective aspect (Laka 2006; Coon 2010, 2013; Coon & Preminger 2011, 2017; Kalin & Van Urk 2014; see also Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, 2007). There is a phase boundary which blocks  $\phi$ -probing from  $v^0$  from targeting object DPs in the imperfective but not the perfective. As the imperfective VP is rendered opaque to  $\phi$ -probing, canonical nominal-licensing cannot occur. In such a scenario, and in fact only in such a scenario, the preposition *er* is inserted to exceptionally license those nominals that would induce ungrammaticality if left unlicensed (cf. Chomsky 1981, Stowell 1981, Bobaljik 1993, Rezac 2011 for accounts of various phenomena that employ similar strategies). This strategy yields the attested pattern of DOM and immediately limits its realization to imperfective constructions. Of course, just because the present analysis is correct for Palauan does not mean that every language with a DOM system must be analyzed in similar terms. Additional research is needed to determine if other languages can and should be accorded similar analyses or if DOM is better understood as an umbrella term for a number of phenomena.

It should also be noted that the type of aspect split found in Palauan is frequently found in ergative-absolutive languages, see (25-27), (e.g. Dixon 1979, Coon 2013). However, the complexity of imperfective aspect invoked here, and in related proposals, is independent of any notion of ‘ergativity’ – morphological or syntactic – in the language. This provides more support for the position that aspect splits have nothing to do with syntactic or morphological ergativity (e.g. Coon 2013, Kalin & Van Urk 2014, Coon & Preminger 2017). Rather, their prevalence in ergative-absolutive languages would appear to arise from the fact that the surface realization of case and agreement is more significantly altered by the addition of structure in ergative-absolutive languages than it is in nominative-accusative ones. This is primarily because subject case-marking/agreement is affected in the former and not the latter (Coon & Preminger 2017).

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